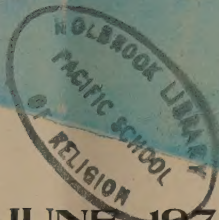


# The South India CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India

MAY-JUNE 1973



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Money Order will not be accepted. Prospectus and Application form also available locally from the office of the Registrar on payment by cash Rs. 4.00 only. Last date of receiving complete Application to the Office of the Registrar is 30th June, 1973.

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## NOTICE

Owing to the drastic Power Cut prevailing in Tamil Nadu, there has been undue delay in posting copies of *The South India Churchman*. The inconvenience caused is regretted.—*Business Manager.*

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# Salvation Today

The Holy Spirit has been leading the Church in recent times into a much wider and deeper understanding of salvation than in the past. Traditionally, salvation had a predominantly other-worldly significance. In this it was like other religions which have tried to answer the question, 'What must I do to be saved?'. Chenchiah, therefore, pointed out that Christianity could be unique only if it was an 'advance' upon such a concept of salvation or function of religion. For, the other-worldly emphasis in Christianity, as in other religions, encouraged devout men and women to withdraw from the world rather than to have an 'engagement' with it.

Secondly, salvation was restricted to the souls of men and had little importance for their bodies or for the material world in which they lived. Though the isolation of the soul or the spirit of man from the rest of his manhood was opposed to both psychology and the Biblical view of man, an artificial division of personality was made somehow. This led to a false spirituality which completely overlooked the importance of the realities of this life and of the physical world for the exercise of Christian concern and responsibility.

Salvation was also understood only in personal and not in social terms. Hence the absence of a concept, an ideal or a sense of mission to society. This is not to say that Christians were indifferent to evils in society or to the material needs of men and women in society. On the contrary it is to the credit of the Church that, in many parts of the world, Churches, and more specially Missions, were the pioneers in social reform and the eradication of social evils. But this was done largely as social amelioration motivated by Christian love rather than as a means for the redemption of society. Also, there was no thought at all of the regeneration or remaking of the structures of society to make them serve the ends of peace and justice. In other words, the hope for the redemption of the individual was not extended to society. On the contrary there was a kind of fatalistic resignation to an early abrogation of the orders of the world. While there may have been a justification for such an attitude of unconcern for society when Christians were living in expectation of the imminent return of Jesus Christ to the world, it was a great travesty of Jesus, teaching about the Kingdom of God that Christians kept it out of this world altogether in their thinking and planning even for many centuries afterwards.

Finally, salvation has tended to be associated with the acceptance of a proposition or dogma—a sort of pass-word of salvation. Thus it has been thought that it was more important or effective for a Christian to subscribe to a certain formula at death than to live out the faith in all his activities during all his life.

The results of the narrow understanding of salvation have been as disastrous for the Church as for the world. Withdrawal of Christians from politics and other 'secular' spheres of human activities has meant virtual abandonment of them to those without Christian faith and insights or even to unscrupulous men who would exploit them for their own ends. And so different kinds of evil have found it easy to make their way into public life when Christians failed to function as 'watchmen' or as the 'conscience' of the world. But, even if the churchmen were eager to withdraw themselves from the world, the world would not leave them or their church alone, but invaded them so that all the corrupt practices and evil forces present in the world outside have now become common features in the Church,



too. Love of authority, struggle for power, ignoble election tactics, nepotism, and all other unedifying characteristics of political and civic affairs bedevil the life of the Church also. We are learning to our cost that an environment which the Church does not help to regenerate will bring about degeneration of the Church itself.

Thus Christian faith has been related to the so-called 'religious' life of a Christian and not to his 'secular' life. Christian love, too, has been too narrowly conceived as 'fellowship' with other Christians or rather Christians of the same denomination. The feeling considered appropriate for others is vague goodwill or charity in the modern sense.

As men of God have been pondering over these consequences of limiting the scope of salvation in Christ, they have also been confronted and challenged by passages in the Bible which they had taken for granted as something they knew only too well. These verses now hit them in the eye, as it were, and made them wonder why they had not paused to think more deeply about them. Phrases like 'God so loved the world' and 'that the world might be saved' made them ask themselves whether the world, and not merely the soul of man, was the sphere and goal of God's saving activity and whether, if it was, man should not also be concerned for its salvation as a co-worker with God. Again, what did it mean to say that salvation had come to the house of Zacheus and not merely to him.

And what was this salvation anyway? Was Jesus' work of healing an integral part of salvation ('making whole') or was it something ancillary to or even outside of salvation proper? Is salvation the power and the love of God working in the lives of men—in their situations, orders and structures—or only in the souls of men and for the sake of their welfare in the hereafter? When we talk about a situation being saved, we usually mean that the evil potentialities in it are averted, jeopardised relationships put right and conditions for peace, justice and fruitfulness of creative effort established. Would this analysis also apply to the saving process in Christ also or does it consist of some special experience, mystical or mysterious, in which the normal laws of psychology and sociology do not operate?

While this new and wider understanding of salvation as involving all of man and the whole of his life has made a great thrust upon theology and the outlook of many individual leaders and members of the churches of the world, it has yet to be accepted and acted upon in dioceses and congregations, especially in our country. At those 'levels' salvation is still understood and pursued as a goal in the old, limited manner. In fact, confronted with what is regarded as a 'modernistic' view the reaction there has been to redouble the emphasis on 'spiritual', other-worldly or 'personal' salvation. As a result, something like a big divide in the theory and practice of Christianity has developed among leaders of the churches. This has been described



as the controversy between the 'horizontalists' and 'verticalists'. Devout Christian thinkers have been distressed over this cleavage which has manifested itself very sharply sometimes in the deliberations of the Assemblies of the World Council of Churches and several of its auxiliary bodies. Therefore, the WCC arranged for the study of the meaning of salvation by big and small groups all over the world during the last five or six years and arranged for a world conference on 'Salvation Today' at Bangkok in January this year.

A few of the official press releases of the Conference and of reactions of individual participants or commentators are published in this Number. From these reports, it is clear that the Conference was an exercise in discovering the 'riches' of Christ's work of salvation rather than in making an agreed theological pronouncement on it. It would also appear that those who took part in it found it an experience of fellowship in Christ among those who differed on almost everything else rather than one of the

Churches' being provided a new and common basis or vision for the further work of the Churches. However the Churches seem to have been left very much where they were before the Conference and little impetus seems to have come from it for *undertaking* in a big or organised manner the work of persuading congregations to see and to accept salvation as comprehensive of the whole of man's life and affairs.

[Note.—The schedule for publication of the *Churchman* has been seriously upset by the power cut and partial lay-off in the Diocesan Press where it is printed. Each monthly Number is getting published only in the next month now. So the May and June issues are being printed together with the hope that, at least from June, regular publication in the beginning of each month may be maintained. Apologies from me and the publisher to readers and advertisers for the delays and for the publication of a single, though enlarged, Number for the months of May and June.—Editor]

## Bangkok 1973

A. C. OOMMEN,\* Vellore

Twenty miles south of Bangkok, the capital of Thailand, International Red Cross has a very spacious and beautiful centre used mainly for the rest and recuperation of their staff from all over the world. This was the site for the W.C.C. Assembly on the Commission for World Mission and Evangelism. A better setting we cannot expect. Thailand, having had the unique honour of never having been under foreign domination, is proud about its traditions and, under a benevolent monarch, venturing out on schemes of rapid development and progress, and is today an example of what modern technology can do without risking personal values. More than that, Thailand is a predominantly Buddhist country and it is a sight that will linger for long in the minds of those of us who saw lines of *sanyasis* in saffron clothes with begging bowls living a life of renunciation and discipline, a living symbol of that search for salvation that the East is famous for.

The theme of the conference was 'Salvation Today'. We have moved a long way from Edinburgh 1910 meeting under a deep optimistic and perhaps unrealistic note asking the question whether the Church really possesses Christ's thought about God or not. This was the beginning of the International Missionary Council. Some landmarks of its conferences are Jerusalem 1928 on the theme, 'Christ our motive and our end', Tambaram 1938 on 'Man's need for regeneration' and the last one, Mexico 1963, on 'God's Mission and our task'.

Nearly 300 delegates representing 54 nations participated in this conference. Some of the outstanding men in the World of Theology were present, men like Prof. Masao Takenaka of Japan, Rev. Kosuke Koyama of Malaysia, Commander T. B. Simatupang of Indonesia, Dr. Moltmann of Tubingen, Bishop Roger Blanchard and Dr. Tracey Jones of U.S.A., Rev. John Taylor of England, Canon Burgess Carr and Dr. John Gatu of Kenya, Dr. M. M. Thomas and Bishop Lesslie Newbigin from India, Archbishop George Appleton of Jerusalem, Dr. John K. Smart of Sierra Leone, Arch-priest Serge Hackel and Bishop Michel Moduigin of U.S.S.R. and others. The main Architects of the conference were

Dr. Philip A. Potter, Dr. F. J. Roberts, the Rev. Steven G. Mackie and the Rev. Emilio Castro.

There were two things that made Bangkok unique and a landmark in the understanding of the mission of the Church. Firstly, this was perhaps the most ecumenical of all the gatherings we have yet had. It was ecumenical in the sense that we had representatives from such different denominations as Roman Catholics and Orthodox, Pentecostals of every shade, independent Churches and S.D.A. In a deeper sense it was ecumenical because, gathering round the concrete and real experience of salvation, more to celebrate than to discuss, we were drawn far more than we expected into a fellowship and a community, where labels got blurred or disappeared. There was an attempt at an early stage to fall back on the traditional controversial lines of conservative evangelicalism *versus* modern liberalism and personal salvation as against social. The urge to get away from these bogus debates and get down to things that matter was deep and real. The freedom this brought in was tremendous and the openness that this created helped each one towards a painful frankness. The voice of the so-called third world was loud and clear, demanding that the West should get down from the luxuries of ivory tower debates and humbly seek salvation today.

The second feature that marked this conference as distinct from other conferences was the central place given to the Bible and Bible study. The tendency usually is to have abstract papers discussed most of the time and an hour's Bible Study at an unearthly hour to prove some points already arrived at! At Bangkok the pattern was totally different. For the first three days the only agenda from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. was Bible Study in groups and in the evening a common Bible Study with an expert panel to guide and with audio-visual aids. The three elements that contribute to an effective Bible Study—understanding of the text in its original setting, awareness of theological reflections in the history of the Church, and the sharing of the experience the Holy Spirit gives to each person—were all equally stressed. Within a short time, almost as a miracle,

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each group merged into a deep fellowship discovering common identity round the Bible, and all other distinctions, however strong they were, receded into the background. In the group in which I was, there were a Roman Catholic and a Protestant both from Ireland coming from the midst of bloodshed in the name of faith, a black and a white both from South Africa, neither mincing words as to the depth of hatred they possess for each other. There were representa-

tives from Pakistan and Bangladesh meeting for the first time. We were not ignoring the realities of the bitterness that exists among us, but discovering the new reality of fellowship through the suffering, death and resurrection of the Lord.

It is in this light that the three results that followed from the Consultation have to be viewed. They are contained in the letter to the Churches.

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## Letter to the Churches on Salvation Today

Coming from all the continents of our earth we have met in Bangkok to explore together the promises and demands of Salvation Today. We have received more than we expected; we have lived it and we have celebrated it in joy and in reality. We want to share with you the experience of these days, which for two convergent reasons has been very rich.

1. This conference, perhaps more than any previous ones, has given most of us a deeper understanding of the word 'ecumenical'. All of us, freely and in confidence of true fellowship have been able, and have known how, to voice our own concerns, sufferings and hopes. The dialogue was frank, without compromise and challenging for the future, in particular between the poor and the rich within and between nations. We regret the small number of Orthodox participants prevented a fuller expression of ecumenicity.

2. We have realised the power of renewal contained in the Gospel when it is shared and read together and when each one and each group can tell what it demands in his or her own situation. To make this so everyone's identity must be respected. Sharing, not only in word, but also in prayer, song and art, of all that God has done for us, where we are and as we are, has profoundly enriched us who came from Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and the Pacific.

**From our sharing three results have become clear:**

1. Without evading or minimizing theological debates it has become clear that it is around the living person of Jesus Christ that we have met, reliving 'that there is no other name given among men by which we must be saved'. Through the work of the Holy Spirit we have recognized together the power of salvation by his cross as it is manifest in his resurrection.

Thus it is to him that we call you to turn. Beyond our own confusions, in the very midst of our most complex problems, God is offering us his salvation which is simple and comprehensive, a wonderful turning upside down of the usual course of events, of our world, expressed in the true conversion of men and women to God.

We have also recognized that it is the whole of human reality that he wants to free from all that keeps it in slavery. In accepting the total weakness of the cross 'all power has been given to him'. Until the end, when he comes to demonstrate his final victory, we see him victoriously at work every time a man or woman comes to true liberty and accepts his responsibility as a person—a child of God.

2. Face to face with him whom we have also met as our judge we become aware of the sharpness of his demands and of the gap that exists between what we believe and what we do. Because of the salvation that is in Jesus Christ and which promises to all 'the glorious liberty of the children

of God' we commit ourselves more fully in the struggle against everything that oppresses men and women today, not only the sin that is in them but also that is in societies. The scandals of racism, of social injustices, of economic and political oppression, the tragic shame of the Indochina war or the bloody suppression of liberation movements, the dehumanization of technological civilization and the threat that it poses for the future of humanity—all these challenge Christians urgently to express in action the salvation of Jesus Christ.

This necessary obedience to the liberating power of Christ, in a coherence of faith and life, must be accompanied by analysis of the situation where it is to be carried out. The abusive misuse of all kinds of power, including the compromises of the churches in this area, must be frankly seen and clearly denounced.

The cross of Christ where his love went to the bitter end forces us to recognize how often we stop along the road and impels us to start walking joyously even if the path leads to sacrifice. It compels us to engage in spoken witness and to enter into dialogue with all those, of one faith or another, of one conviction or another, who are also loved by God. In spite of differences the other must never be regarded as an enemy, but through Jesus Christ as a brother or sister through whom God wants to enrich us.

3. The experience of sharing in Bangkok obliges us to keep on searching for structures of a common life that will enrich our lives. It is very clear that we must find new ways of responding together to our common calling to mission in the six continents of one divided world, so that everyone may take full responsibility and obtain full identity. In this respect we are only at the beginning of the road. We have however noted the development of some promising experiments which call us all to use more creative imagination to find a mature and honest relationship. For this to be a true renewal we shall be led to take some painful decisions. So that the full and responsible identity of the traditionally receiving churches may be more speedily furthered, it may be necessary for there to be a temporary withdrawal of foreign funds and personnel.

It is at the local level that the reality of the church universal must be lived. In today's world with an ever-growing migration which challenges our communities, all of our churches are called to receive the strangers in their midst as brothers and sisters who manifest the catholicity of the Church and share in its local mission. God has set before us riches that we must learn to receive.

It is under the sign of great hope that we write. In the humility to which we are forced by our powerlessness we have learned once again that 'the word of God is not bound' and that it opens wide the doors of salvation.



# Salvation Today: A Personal Statement

M. M. THOMAS, *Chairman, W.C.C. Central Committee*

I find my task this morning most difficult. Already, before coming here, we have waded through a mass of personal and group statements which express the search for salvation and its experience by people in a variety of situations, as well as evaluations of these from various perspectives. We have had studies on the Biblical meaning of Salvation; we have had several summaries of findings from Christian study-groups in different parts of the world.

All this is so comprehensive that I have wondered what contribution I could make to the on-going discussion which was not merely a repetition of some of the ideas already canvassed. Therefore, what I have decided to do, after discussion with those in charge of the programme-planning, is to speak from within my own situation, the Indian situation, and more particularly the situation of the Director of a Christian Institute engaged in explicating the Gospel of Christ within and in relation to the Indian situation, and to articulate my own personal understanding of the meaning of human salvation offered in Jesus Christ. If I don't make sense, or make only partial sense, it will be because of the particularist situational and personal approach I am taking.

In 1956, when the National Christian Council of India and the Christian Institute for the Study of Society together launched the Study of Rapid Social Change in India, Dr. John Mathai, who was for some time Minister for Finance in Nehru's Government and was at that time head of the State Bank of India, gave the inaugural address. He spoke on the new pattern for the developed and just society which India was seeking to build. He concluded his talk by giving, as a Christian, his own vision of India's future, relating it to the picture we have in the final part of Psalm 144. He said, '... in broad idealistic terms, allowing for the fact that the Psalmist lived in a pastoral and primitive agricultural society and we live in a mainly industrial society, there is a great deal in common between the picture he paints in the 144th Psalm and the society we are trying to evolve:

That our sons may grow up as the young plants and  
that our daughters may be as the polished corners of  
the Temple

That our garners may be full and plenteous with all  
manner of store;

That our sheep may bring forth thousands and ten  
thousands in our streets; that our oxen may be  
strong to labour;

That there be no leading into captivity,

And no complaining in our streets,

Happy are the people that are in such a state,

Blessed are the people who have the Lord for  
their God.

That was the first time that Psalm 144 came alive for me, as expressing the situation of a developing nation like India and voicing the aspirations and expectations of its people for a richer and fuller human life. The dynamism and the struggle, the hope and the despair in the situation are created by these aspirations, and the pursuit of what the Psalmist calls happiness. He includes four elements in this prayer: First, health of body and beauty of form for youth; second, the development of material abundance; third, security from aggression and peace; and fourth social justice.

## Material and Spiritual

The secular pursuit of happiness—peoples seeking a richer and fuller realisation of the potentialities of their humanity through the building of a new society which will provide health and plenty, peace and justice is the context within which I must speak of spiritual salvation. This is precisely what the Psalmist does. For, after picturing the society of his dreams, he says:

Happy the people to whom such blessings fall!

Happy the people whose God is the Lord!

The question is whether there is a vital relation between the two—between the happiness which the people realise through building a new and more human society and the happiness which they realize through acknowledging the Lord as God.

I have often quoted Nicolas Berdyaev's statement which says that while the problem of my own bread is a material question, the problem of my neighbour's bread is a spiritual one, and that therefore economics is shot through with human spirituality. Human spirituality undergirds all human strivings for health and sex, and development and justice. The only question is whether it is a true or false spirituality, that is whether the structure of ultimate meaning and sacredness to which it is committed is the meaning and sacredness which is truly ultimate, i.e. of God, or simply created by men in their self-centredness and rejection of God, and therefore idolatrous.

The Psalmist envisages for his people bodily health and material wealth, security from aggression and social justice. He is, however, concerned with these good things as an expression of a certain spiritual relation between the people and God. That is to say, when they are recognized and received as blessings promised by God to His people in His covenant with them, which provides the structure of meaning for their lives, and as means to acknowledge God as the ultimate source of sacredness, then they become witnesses to God and to His salvation of His people.

Herein lies the mission of the Church; it is to participate in the movements of human liberation in our time in such a way as to witness to Jesus Christ as the Source, the Judge and the Redeemer of the human spirituality and its orientation as it is at work in these movements, and therefore as the Saviour of Man today.

Let me acknowledge that the redemption of human spirituality from idolatrous realms of meaning and sacredness has been the primary concern of Christian Mission in the past; only it was seen in relation to the spirituality and the structures of meaning or sacredness behind the traditional societies. No historian will deny that the Gospel did play a decisive role in preaching deliverance from traditional sources of oppression. That is to say, the spiritual creativity behind today's revolutionary search for a society which harnesses nature through science and technology for human welfare, eliminates poverty and oppression, opens the door of participation in power structures to hitherto submerged groups, and moves towards a fraternity of free and equal persons has its source, in part at least, in Christ's salvation of the human spirit. One could speak of it as a new stage in God's process of Creation.

## Creation and Fall

But every new stage in Creation has its Fall; and every creativity in turning to false realms of meaning and sacred-

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ness becomes self-destructive and betrays the human liberation which it seeks and which is promised by Christ. The oppressive traditional order then gives place not to a new discipline of personal and social responsibility but to chaos and to self-seeking. Affluence is sought as the be-all and end-all of life and the finer social values are sacrificed.

Revolutions for justice get lost in the fury of self-righteousness; they devour their own offspring and become sources of new oppression. Secularization, which delivers men from superstitions and oppressive religious institutions and dogmatism, succumbs to the institutionalism and dogmatism of self-sufficient secularism and self-redemptive historicism. Alienated from God in the structure of our spirit and in the resultant fear of ultimate disintegration, we make frantic efforts to achieve self-redemption by creating new religious and salvationist ideologies, only to see our idealism crumbling to the ground, leaving in its wake frustration and disintegration. This is the same old vicious circle of law, sin and death and we are today more conscious of its reality and its power than in any previous period.

It is precisely at this point that the victory of the Cross is relevant. The mission of the Church in this context is to be present within the creative liberation movements of our time which the Gospel of Christ itself has helped to take shape, and so participate in them as to be able to communicate the genuine gospel of liberation, which liberates men from the vicious circle of sin and alienation, law and self-righteousness, frustration and death and brings them to Christ's new humanity where there is forgiveness and reconciliation, grace and justification and renewal and eternal life.

My main thesis is finished. Since my context and perspective have been very personal and partial I have left many aspects of the question of the meaning of Christian Salvation unanswered. But I wish to mention a few points before closing.

First, I have been indifferent, to my mind, to the fruitless debate between the advocates of individual salvation and social salvation. That debate always leaves me cold. My emphasis has been on the salvation of man; and everything of man, his individuality and his collectivity included, has roots in different levels of self-awareness, sense of spiritual freedom and responsibility, and the search for what I have called meaning and sacredness. Individuality is no doubt a very high water-mark of spiritual awareness and creativity, but it is a late-comer in social history. Patterns of spirituality and search for meaning and sacredness have however informed tribes, ethnic groups and other organized communities, what the Bible calls the 'nations', even before the modern age of liberal individualism had emerged. The Gospel is for the 'nations' as well as for individuals.

### Beyond History

Second, will the creative processes and the liberation movements in history ever be redeemed from idolatrous structures of meaning and saved by Christ to the extent that we can hope for a relatively high degree of human emancipation this side of the eschatological hope of the final salvation? The answer to this depends upon the depth of the response of faith.

One version of the 'beyond history' and 'after life' which is very current among Christians involved in political movements of liberation, is to say that divine forgiveness in Christ and the fellowship of forgiven sinners can be experienced only 'beyond politics' and 'after the power-struggles' of politics between the oppressed and the oppressors. The politics of liberation are conceived entirely under 'the law of natural necessity' either as inevitable class-war or inevitable international war. I have no doubt

necessities of sinful nature play their part in all power-struggles and must be reckoned with by those concerned with politics of liberation. I am not so Utopian as to deny the inevitability of accumulated sin in social history. But I do not think the message of divine forgiveness and the *koinonia* in Christ created by it can be relegated to a realm 'beyond' or 'after' politics. Just as in the case of individuals, in the case of classes, nations and races also, divine forgiveness and the community of forgiveness can and must break through sinful necessities, transform them and make the struggle more human.

Third, we are living at a time when we are deeply conscious of pluralism in the world—pluralism of human situations and needs, of varied religions and secular cultures, with different traditions of metaphysics, ideologies and world-views, in terms of which Christians themselves seek to express their commitment to, and confession of, Christ. So much so any kind of unity in the doctrine of Christ or of Salvation in Christ, which has been the goal of traditional Christian Churches, is to my mind impossible to conceive except in religious imperialistic terms.

What kind of a criterion of Christian faith can we lay down in a pluralistic age? Dr. Hans Kung when he visited India recently said that the criterion of faith could be that the believer should in some form acknowledge the Person of Jesus as 'decisive for life', that is to say, to translate in my terms, decisive for the knowledge of ultimate reality and the realization of the ultimate meaning of life and its fulfilment here and hereafter.

### Salvation and the Church

If the above is true, and salvation in Christ is conceded outside the Church, what is the significance of the Church? I have assumed the role of the Church as the essential agent of mission. But what is the Church? What are the essential marks of the self-identity of the Church? How should it be structured to participate in the various religious and secular communities and in the creative processes and liberation movements so that it may promote its mission of salvation? This needs to be more fully explored. But let me just list a few fragmentary and rather unconnected ideas:

(1) I am personally convinced that the gathering for the study of the Word and the celebration of the Eucharist is the centre of the Church's fellowship. But whether the fellowship should be a separate religious community among other religious communities, with most of the primary levels of social living of the believers confined to the Christian circle, and even with a Christian law governing their conduct and recognised by the State as it is today in many countries of Asia, and surely in India, is a moot question.

(2) In a situation like India where Christian conversion has come to mean a transfer of allegiance from one culture and juridical community to another, rather than from idols to God, through Christ, and where baptism has become almost like the old circumcision, how can baptism regain its true meaning of spiritual conversion? Is it by considering baptism a condition of membership of the Church or a privilege of membership?

(3) Recently Wilfred Cantwell Smith has raised the question whether the word 'Christian' should be considered an adjective or a noun. Were the believers at Antioch first called 'Christian' to denote a new quality of faith or 'Christians' to denote a separate communal identity? The answer to it has great implications for the nature of our mission and the methods and goals of our mission.

(4) My friend the late E. V. Mathew often raised the question whether it is not better, for the sake of the Christian mission, that the Church form new sects with a



prophetic vocation within the movements of cultural creativity and social liberation, rather than try to bring about one organised Church of India, which may only mean several small ghettos joining forces to form one large ghetto.

Here let me stop. I leave all unanswered questions for this conference of experts to tackle.

Courtesy : *This Month*

## A Taste of Salvation at Bangkok\*

LESSLIE NEWBIGIN, *Madras*

The conference called by the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the W.C.C. at Bangkok on *Salvation Today* was an experience different from any of the earlier world missionary conferences. Its theme was right at the very centre of the missionary concern. Its make-up was more truly representative of the world-wide Church as a whole than that of any previous conference. It spanned the most agonising conflicts of our time. Its difference from previous meetings in the great series from Edinburgh 1910 onwards was that it was deeply involved in the realities of this world of the 70's.

I confess that I went to Bangkok with anxiety in my heart. I had found the meetings of the Missionary Section at Uppsala very painful. There had been a futile polarisation in which one side was unable to hear the other with sympathy. There were many indications that Bangkok might be a repetition of the same thing on a bigger scale, with added bitterness. This did not happen. Something quite different happened which it is hard to describe. Each delegate will give his own testimony to what the Spirit did for us at Bangkok. I can only try to give mine.

Two major statements at the opening of the meeting shaped all that followed. M. M. Thomas gave us 'a personal statement' on the meaning of salvation today. The heart of it was a profound analysis of the meaning of human spirituality. Man is part of the animal species involved in the processes of organic nature, but all this involvement 'takes place not within the realm of necessity but within a structure of meaning and sacredness which the self in the freedom of its self-transcendence chooses'. Any attempt to set over against each other the spiritual character of man on the one hand, and his physical, social, economic and political character on the other, is futile. The mission of the Church is concerned with the salvation of human spirituality, not in an individualistic isolation, but in relation to all the realities of human life in our time. Dr. Thomas went on to say some things about the forms of the Church's life and unity with which I do not agree, but this opening statement was of immense importance to the whole meeting in creating a context of discussion which precluded any crude collision between 'pietists' and 'radicals'. Not only this statement, but the living embodiment in the person of a man who really holds these things together in his own life, was of great importance for the whole meeting—even though Dr. Thomas had unfortunately to leave early in the conference.

The second major opening statement was Philip Potter's report. In a masterful way which it is impossible to summarise in a few sentences, he placed the Christian world mission for our time in the context of three great paradoxes. The first is that we live in a world which is being unified at an accelerating pace, but which is yet divided by fearful conflicts—political, economic and racial. The political dominance of the super-powers, the economic exploitation of the poor nations by the rich, and the arrogance of white racism

are among the realities with which the Christian mission has to deal if it is to be faithful. The second paradox is that while man's technical mastery over nature increases more and more rapidly, it has become frighteningly clear that the ideology (or idolatry?) of secular power can lead only to disaster—the outward disaster of a planet made uninhabitable, and the inward disaster for the soul of man which cannot live for ever in a religionless world. The third paradox is in the realm of culture. On the one hand there are deliberate attempts to renew or re-create culture—most notably in China; on the other hand we are witnessing in the western world a revolt against the dominant culture and the attempt to create a wholly new style of life over against the dominant culture. This address, and the many of Dr. Potter's interventions in the plenary debates, helped to keep the conference awake to the real issues of our time and to prevent the development of a kind of debate between 'conservatives' and 'radicals' which would have been irrelevant to the real issues.

The major part of the following three days was devoted to the study of the Bible, partly in plenary sessions where a variety of teaching methods was used, and mainly in small groups which met for nearly 15 hours in three days. Once again the Bible proved its astonishing power to speak to people in their real situations, to open out new horizons, and to open the participants to one another. As one of the Sections reported: 'In this conference we have once again experienced the way in which common Bible study unites us, by surprising us again and again, and by leading us together into a deeper understanding of God's will for all men'. Above all, this experience in the Bible groups gave us a new relation to each other. We had come to know and respect each other as people, to accept each other's limitations and to feel a sense of mutual responsibility even where we disagreed profoundly. This helped immeasurably as we went into the sectional and plenary discussions.

The early plenary discussions were marked by very sharp attacks by the representatives of the Third World on the churches and nations which hold the overwhelming economic and political and cultural power. Their arrogant use of power—in the world of missionary relationships as well as in the political and economic spheres—was repeatedly attacked. The few representatives of the churches in the 'Second World'—Eastern Europe and Russia—made occasional complaints that their problems were being ignored. The representatives of the 'First World'—those whose speeches and documents have usually dominated the proceedings of ecumenical conferences, maintained on the whole an embarrassed silence. It was hard for them to know what to say. Probably most of them did not wish to engage in what one Brazilian delegate called 'sado-masochistic rituals which leave realities unchanged'. I think that they were really hearing what was said. The test will be afterwards.

The question of power and powerlessness was very central to the discussion. At some points it seemed to be suggested

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that the transfer of power from the powerful to the powerless was the thing needed, but others repudiated this. The delegate from the Kimbanguist Church of Central Africa eloquently pointed out that his Church, which has never employed missionaries and has never had power in the sense that the western churches have enjoyed it, has nevertheless grown far more rapidly than the latter. At some points one became tired of the incessant litany about the oppressed and the oppressors. The speaker was always the oppressed. Sometimes one felt that a very naïve sort of philosophic anarchism lay behind what was being said—the idea that the life of man can be ordered without any use of power. There was little to help those who are entrusted with power to learn how to use it. If M. M. Thomas had been able to stay to the end, our discussions might have been more realistic at this point.

For me one of the most significant remarks, thrown out almost as an aside at the end of an intervention by General Simatoupong of Indonesia, was to the effect that the crucial question for the world mission of the Church today is 'Can the West be converted?' Some of the delegates of the Third World rejected this; it seemed to be putting the West once more in the centre. Personally I find it difficult to escape the conclusion that it is true. The 'developed' world still sets the pace and direction, and none of the rest of the world can really keep out of reach of this apparently irresistible movement—even though it is seen to be a movement towards disaster. The world cannot turn its back on technology, but it does seem to me to be the crucial question whether the 'developed' world can find a radically new direction, a new concept of what development really is, a new concept of what is good for man. It was in the context of this remark that Simatoupong added the statement that Church growth might be meaningless in the West but that in a country like Indonesia it might be an essential sign of salvation.

The plenary discussions, however, were not the most important element in the conference. Other things were more important. There were the group Bible studies to which I have referred. There were the acts of worship—deeply felt and shared. The cry 'Out of the depths I cry unto thee O Lord' was the sung response that united a great variety of different prayers spoken extempore from many different situations. There was the evening when we shared through film in a vivid experience of the world we live in, sang and danced together. For bishops, theologians and Church bureaucrats to have to dance around on their stiff legs and be lovingly accepted in spite of their stiffness—this was all part of the grace of God at work in the meeting. It was all concrete and totally personal. It was not the 'pale cerebral Christianity' of which we have known so much. The inputs of the meeting were all concrete—Bible passages and concrete human experiences—in Ulster, in Vietnam, in the wards of a hospital for the dying, in the places where people know the difference between being saved and being lost. And outputs were of the same kind. Delegates and groups were encouraged to write their testimonies, protests, prayers and cartoons on the wall-spaces around the main hall. The end-product was testimony rather than dogma. Few formal statements of lasting value came from the meeting, but something much more valuable came out. It is embodied in the personal and corporate testimonies and prayers and affirmations which delegates wrote before they left. These cannot be summarised without the loss of their power. The reader should ponder them for himself.

I have studied the reports of the great series of world missionary conferences—Edinburgh, Jerusalem, Tambaram, Whitby, Willingen, Ghana, Mexico City. I was present at Willingen and deeply involved at Mexico. In spite of

the immense changes in that period of more than half a century, I think all these meetings had one thing in common. I could try to describe it by saying that they spoke with the consciousness of a secure power-base. Very obviously this was so at Edinburgh. Willingen and Ghana were much more conscious of the ambiguities and perplexities at the heart of the missionary movement. By the time we reached Mexico we had in *theory* fully recognised that the mission-field is everywhere; yet the personnel of the meeting was still predominantly white and western. What all these meetings had in common, it seems to me, was a strong feeling that 'we' have the answers and other people need them. Even in the Western Churches where the old assurance about the Gospel has become so much weakened, there was a complete conviction that 'development' was the answer to the world's need, and that 'we' could provide it.

At Bangkok the feeling was profoundly different. 'Out of the depth I cry unto thee, O Lord' was the cry of us all together. Our concern about power led us again and again to the vision of the powerlessness of the Lamb. We did clash and hurt one another, but there was no pitched battle in which one side defeated the other. Rather we were humbled, and because we saw that the powerlessness of Jesus is a more profound reality than our powers, we were helped to accept one another in our need of mutual support and understanding. Perhaps one could say—in a sense that I would find it difficult to say about any of the previous ecumenical conferences which I have attended—that there was the glimpse of a new kind of spirituality. It was expressed by one of the delegates who said 'We need not crusading minds but crucified minds'. I think that the personal reality of Jesus himself—not as a theological concept but as a living and encountered reality—laid hold on us as persons and not just as minds.

Because the meeting had this character, its findings can be communicated in testimony rather than in formal statement. One of the Sections wisely adopted this form for a large part of its report. I close by quoting at length an 'Affirmation of Faith' which forms part of this section report:

We came from almost too many situations,  
with the usual prejudices, our own ideas, our exaggerated hopes,  
many of us tired of conferences, all of us full of our own preoccupations.

Then we shared our biographical materials, struggling to express our thoughts, groping for words that might communicate, hurting each other by hasty reactions, being hurt when not heard, showing some of the frustrations we have in our work back home, sharing our fear for the future of the world, our feeble faith.

And in that process we were met by God himself,  
who revealed himself in his word which we studied, in our friends  
around the table who questioned us, who gave us new insights,

comforted us, accepted our limitations.

No more than a glimpse of God we saw,  
a smile of his grace,  
a gentle gesture of judgment.

And so we repented because we saw that God is so much greater than we.

We experienced the meek force of God's invitation to continuous conversion,  
and we accepted to be sent back whence we came,  
a little better motivated, a little wiser, a little sadder,  
a little closer to him.



# The Vision Demands Action

EMILIO CASTRO, *Director, CWME, WCC*

Bangkok, Thailand — We have a vision: a comprehensive understanding of salvation that begins with a personal encounter with Christ, that opens our eyes to the mystery and glory of a love that encompasses the world and challenges us to enter into that love in action with the world; a vision that invites us to see human history as the arena in which God is working and encourages us to work for full salvation.

The surprise and glory of our faith eliminates our small internal differences. We do not have excuses for refusing co-operation and mutual correction. Our vision is a challenge to mission: to proclaim, to live, to confess. There it is. The whole world is to be called to full humanization.

A second consequence of this comprehensive vision is a sense of frustration before the magnitude of the task; the oppression existing in the world; wars and rumours of war. Our powerlessness to cope with it all is dramatically evident.

We must search for the answers to this frustration from the depths of our faith. But we are not alone. God works through many agents—liberation movements—to our surprise, God works through the Church, taking what there is to show what seems to be. Dialogue and co-operation belong to our mission. Our specific task is to relate all human life to the living purpose of God. Let us go on, faithfully trying to fulfil this our task with the confidence that all things work for the benefit of those who love God.

We are at the end of a missionary era. We are at the very beginning of world mission. We have heard here harsh and hard words on the missionary enterprise. But now it is more than emotion. It is theological reflection. It is a challenge to co-operation. The affirmation of African culture, the conveying of Indian spirituality, the challenge to social revolution are the starting points for a new day in world mission. The cry for help of brothers and sisters in Europe, the expression of concern for world mission from the delegates of socialist countries invite us to a new day. Our mood should not be one of frustration but rather anticipation. We come to the end of our era with adult churches everywhere. They are a clear indication that the grace of God, notwithstanding missionary sins, did bless the missionary enterprise with the emergence of self-reliant churches. This is our vision. As we dare to look for judgement and the saving activity of God, we will discover new possibilities for testimony and service.

Mission is engagement for God in local situations. Let us go back to our countries to implement the vision we have received. Let us continue our dialogue to deepen the vision. Let us dare to believe that God is at work. Let us be faithful to the heavenly vision. Our Council exists to help the churches in the fulfilment of their mission. We will concentrate all our energies to this purpose. We count on your support.

Courtesy: *This Month*

## Commission on World Mission and Evangelism Assembly, Bangkok, Thailand

### An Affirmation on Salvation Today

As we have met together in this fellowship  
We have experienced the joy of the living Christ  
and have been renewed and challenged  
by the mutual faith one of another.

We have been deeply conscious of our failures  
in obedience to our Lord  
and our blindness to the ways he sets before us.  
We are moved by a profound feeling of penitence  
which both pains us  
and frees us for Christ's renewal.

Over and above our distress  
at the problems and perplexities of the world,  
and our confusion about the structures and role of the

We see the shining of the Light  
which no darkness can quench.

With gratitude and joy we affirm again  
our confidence in the sufficiency of our crucified and risen  
Lord.  
We know him as the one who is, who was and who is to  
come,  
the sovereign Lord of all.

To the individual he comes with power  
to liberate him from every evil and sin,  
from every power in heaven and earth,  
and from every threat of life or death

To the world he comes as the Lord of the universe,  
with deep compassion for the poor and the hungry,  
to liberate the powerless and the oppressed.  
To the powerful and the oppressors he comes  
in judgment and mercy.

We see God at work today  
both within the church and beyond the church  
towards the achievement of his purpose  
that justice might shine on every nation.

He calls his church to be part of his saving activity  
both in calling men to decisive personal response to his  
Lordship  
and in unequivocal commitment to the movements and works  
by which all men may know justice  
and have opportunity to be fully human.

In joyous trust in Christ's power and victory  
we can live with freedom and hope  
whatever the present may be.  
The Lord is at hand.



# Bangkok: The Start of 'World' Mission

Bangkok, Thailand—'We are at the end of a missionary era and at the very beginning of the world mission.' That is the way Dr. Emilio Castro, new Director of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches (WCC) summed up the 'Salvation Today' Conference, which closed here on January 8.

'We have heard here harsh words on the missionary enterprise. But now it is more than emotion—it is theological reflection. The affirmation of African culture, the conveying of Indian spirituality, the challenge to social revolution are the starting points for a new day in world mission. The cry for help from brothers and sisters in Europe, the expression of concern for world mission by delegates of socialist countries invite us to a new day.

'Our mood should not be frustration but anticipation,' he concluded.

At the last World Mission Conference of the WCC at Mexico City in 1963 the watchword was 'mission in six continents'. But people from Asia, Africa and Latin America were not as evident or vocal as here. At Bangkok, Third World people numbered 52 per cent of the total voting delegates.

But geography was not the only factor accounting for 'the sharp clash of passionate convictions' as the group reflecting on the conference stated in its summing up.

'Our experience at Bangkok perhaps represents the end of the long period in which those who were conscious of holding power could speak with confidence about offering the gift of salvation to the rest of the world,' said the reflectors' group. At an earlier period this offer was made in terms of the Christian message. In more recent years it has been made in terms of development. But the fundamental assumption was the same: those who came from countries which had preponderant political and economic power were offering salvation to the rest. No such offer comes from our meeting at Bangkok.

## Celebration

The first purpose of the World Conference on 'Salvation Today' was to celebrate and proclaim the richness of salvation as a gift of God through the Holy Spirit, as witnessed to by the Scriptures, and experienced in many ways by men and women today in their struggle for meaning and fullness of life and for social justice.

'God's justice manifests itself both in the justification of the sinner and in social and political justice,' said the section on Salvation and Social Justice in a Divided World. 'As guilt is both individual and corporate, so God's liberating power changes both persons and structures.... We see the struggles for economic justice, political freedom and cultural renewal as elements in the total liberation of the world through the mission of God.'

Another key paragraph said: 'Through Christ, men and women are liberated and empowered with all their energies and possibilities to participate in His messianic work.... He liberates from the prison of guilt. He takes the inevitability out of history.... Faith in Christ releases in man creative freedom for the salvation of the world.'

Specific suggestions included: a call to 'expose the negative influence of the "donor mentality" manifested in development aid thus perpetuating existing economic and political system', and support for the resolution taken by the WCC Central Committee concerning a withdrawal of investments from Southern Africa. The WCC was asked to sponsor a meeting of leaders of local community action groups to

plan ways of carrying out the churches' mission to the poor in local situations.

## Identity Crisis

The section on Culture and Identity said: 'Where there is no human being one cannot even speak of "salvation today". White racism has deprived many people in Africa and other parts of the world of their identity as human beings.'

Noting that 'God has been heard to speak predominantly with a "masculine voice"', a paragraph on women's liberation said: 'God's "feminine voice" will only be heard as women are enabled to make their own particular contribution to theological thinking and in the whole life of the Church.'

One consequence of holding the 'Salvation Today' conference in Thailand was an emphasis on dialogue between Christians and Buddhists, which included a visit to a nearby *wat* (temple), Buddhist-Christian panel discussion and informal talks with small groups. The sub-section on dialogue with people of living faiths discussed the relationship between dialogue and evangelism. It said: 'A desire to share and a readiness to let others share with us should inspire our witness to Christ rather than a desire to win a theological argument. We were glad to note that increasingly mission is being carried on in this spirit of dialogue without the subsequent decrease in the sense of urgency in evangelism.'

After hearing the action report on Angola, this section said: 'We as Christians declare that colonial domination is anti-Christian because it denies to each man his inalienable right to personhood. No church can support such a system without betraying her own vocation and mission in the world.'

## Vietnam Resolution

The Asian setting of the conference 'only an hour's flying time from the wastelands of Vietnam' meant that considerable time was spent on a resolution titled 'Salvation Today and Indo-China'.

'How can we preach the good news of Salvation Today when on the same day a holocaust of destruction is unleashed which is widely believed by its perpetrators to be a defence of freedom and Christian values?' the preamble asked. 'How can we discuss a missionary strategy of the Christian church in our time when millions of Asians are faced with the brutal power politics of countries some of which are made up predominantly of people who profess Christianity?'

Lastly the resolution pledged support to those who for conscience' sake refuse to pay taxes or serve in the army and work to end the war. It asked that draft resisters and deserters be fully accepted as American citizens 'who have served their country well'.

## Salvation and the Churches

The section on Churches Renewed in Mission said: 'Salvation works to change persons, local congregations and their relations with each other, and also to bring healing and liberation to the community.... A local congregation that lives to itself sabotages the saving action of God in the neighbourhood.' It also suggested a Christian from another country could represent the catholicity of the church... and prevent the local church from becoming



inward-looking. It urged WCC member-churches to see how the sending and receiving of missionaries may become 'completely mutual and international'.

On relations between churches and mission agencies, the report said: 'The very idea of power—conceived as the authority to administer funds and deploy personnel—is alien to a true understanding of the Church. The simple transfer of power from the church to another is not the answer. The emergence of "power elites" either in sending or receiving churches distorts the life of the church and hinders the fulfilment of its mission'. Another recommendation urged that churches receiving personnel should be full participants in setting the agenda for mission.

The section examined a proposal for a 'moratorium'

in the sending of funds and personnel for a set period of time. It said this would enable the receiving church to find its identity, set its own priorities and discover its own resources for mission. Obviously it is not applicable everywhere. Mrs. Takeda Cho, a WCC president, was deeply impressed with the spirit of interdependence and sharing expressed in this report. She asked if the term missionary could be replaced with a new word expressing this interdependence.

As the reflectors concluded, the Bangkok experience 'is embodied in the lives of those who participated and in the concrete actions of churches, missions and ecumenical agencies which will follow from it'.

—EPS.

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## Science and the Christian faith

M. E. PRABHAKAR, S.C.M., Bangalore

Biblical Text: Psalm 19 : 1-6

The first part of this psalm, like other nature psalms, is a magnificent example of Hebrew poetry. The psalmist is in a meditative mood, gazing in awesome wonder at the splendour of the heavens—their vastness and beauty, the orderly succession of day and night with their beneficent lights—the flaming sun proudly running his heavenly course during the day, and the golden moon and the streaming stars at night. He is filled with a deep sense of infinite mystery; there is a flash of understanding, he is inspired and bursts forth into song, 'The heavens tell out the glory of God, and the vault of heaven reveals his handiwork'. He experiences a revelation of God. The psalmist surely did not have the same understanding of nature or the laws of nature as we have today. Yet, to him nature did declare the glory of God. To the psalmist, nature is not merely the creation of God, nor simply an instrument he employs to bless or discipline His people, but it contained something of His mind and revealed his purposes. The heavens declare the glory of God, precisely because they are an expression of His mind. He reveals Himself in His majesty and power through the events in nature, and because it embodies His mind He continues to uphold and sustain it.

What of us in the late 20th century? With our vast resources of scientific knowledge built up through amazingly powerful tools of technology, do we sometimes pause to wonder at the gloriousness of our universe and the marvellous fact of our existence in it? What has nature to tell us about God? What is our situation, as Christians, in the context of the current 'explosion of knowledge' and progressive unravelling of the mysteries of nature, by Science? Does contemporary science hinder or help our faith in God? Does it sharpen our sensitivities and enhance our responses, to God? What has the scientific world-view to offer in the way of how we shall think of God? Does 20th century Science provide new or additional insights and meaningful symbols to meditate upon and worship God more truthfully?

The questions have been posed in this particular way, recognising the fact that many students find it very difficult to integrate their learning with their faith, and that they resolve this difficulty by neatly separating faith from learning, in effect compartmentalising them, with reference to their actual ways of thinking, doing and being. Somewhere along the way the connection between their faith and reason may get lost, both becoming characterised by a lack of openness, honesty and objectivity. In other words, what happens really is the exact opposite of what is supposed to be achieved by intellectual training! One might venture to suggest that

both their faith and reason remain superficial and each tends to be threatened by the other. However, to be fair to such students and graduates, it must be said that the available patterns of educational and theological instruction do not successfully perform the task of promoting openness, depth, honesty and objectivity. Many of our Science students accept blindly the proposition that science and religion are essentially opposed to each other (one wonders, what then makes them undertake scientific studies!), and they fail to see that such opposition is in fact the result of how man uses his science or his religion. There is no conscious attempt to use the knowledge acquired in one to sharpen and support the knowledge gained from the other. Such an attitude may result among Christian students, for instance in the separation of their place of work (laboratory) from the place of worship (church). This kind of cleavage becomes apparent in the kind of obsession with questions like evolution *vs.* creation, this-worldly (secular) *vs.* heavenly (sacred) knowledge, spiritual *or* intellectual faith, and so on.

It is not within the present capabilities of Science to speak of God; in this sense it is godless or secular. But it is this same secular Science that has now become characterised by a new intellectual freedom and openness—there is a new awareness among the scientists of its social purposes and usefulness and of the moral and ethical implications in the practice of Science. Many Scientists suggest at least two legitimate ways of thinking about Science—one, in a narrow sense, is to say that the only function of Science is to seek knowledge—to satisfy, at least in part, man's thirst for knowledge and understanding. The second, broader view, is to say that Science should be employed to serve the needs of man and to improve human existence. In recent times, Science has become a most 'powerful historical movement that has affected the world profoundly, greatly expanded man's consciousness, and changed not only his environment, but his thoughts and behaviour'. In this sense, Science becomes more than just a system of ideas; it becomes 'a way of life and work and thought' affecting the very foundations of human life. Can we then afford to discount the relevance of Science for our Christian faith?

Science, however, offers provisional or tentative explanations, that is, only in a limited and immediate sense, answering questions of *how* things happen and not of *why*—in a final or ultimate sense. This is where questions of faith and religious beliefs assume importance. Man is so constituted that he is forever seeking for answers to ultimate



questions—*Who am I? Has life any meaning and purpose?* There is also the constant tension in his life between his potentialities for evil and his potentialities for good. He seeks explanations for not only his state of being (physical) but also for the reason of his being (spiritual). It becomes obvious then that Science and Religion (and the Arts) must join hands to achieve for man a truly adequate faith, to understand the world and his life in it, in all its aspects. Understood in this way, Science and Religion become complementary to each other.

### The Scientific World-view

20th century Science has contributed to an exciting new world-view that has truly revolutionary implications for human thought and endeavour. In being intellectually more adventurous and honest, it differs markedly from the earlier or pre-twentieth century scientific world-view. Further, it is more hospitable to religious ways of thinking and, in this sense, becomes faith-supporting.

Contemporary Science presents the picture of nature (world) that is (a) very *complex*, a world of *depth*; (b) an *open unbounded* world; and (c) a world of mystery that cannot be fully grasped or understood. Now, this is in sharp contrast to the extremely simple picture presented by pre-20th century science. It describes a world that can be easily explained and its events foretold with reasonable certainty. Pre-20th century science suggested a world that was essentially (a) *shallow*, meaning that the final answers could be found relatively close to the surface of things; (b) *closed*, suggesting that it was a completed and unchanging world—it was determined and could therefore offer no new developments; and (c) *unmysterious*, in the sense that the world could hold no real surprises and that eventually all questions could be answered by science, at least in principle. One can now guess why such a world-view ceased to be exciting and became an inhibiting factor for fresh human thinking. The publication of Darwin's Theory of Evolution during the latter half of the 19th century, at a time when pre-20th century science was fast becoming rigid and dogmatic, made it virtually impossible for it to be objectively evaluated to provide a stimulating factor for new thinking; on the other hand, it was received and fitted easily and neatly into the closed-world-view of the time. It is in this context that one must understand the over-zealous interpretation of the Darwinian theory, and even its misinterpretations which persist as a hang-over even to this day.

This kind of narrow thinking promoted by pre-20th century Science adversely affected religious thinking to make it defensive and even protective of its special truths. One manifestation of this was the strengthening and active promotion of fundamentalist theology. Many religious thinkers were put off by the closed-world-view and turned their attention from nature to history. Theologians generally turned away from seeking for 'God's presence in nature' to 'God's presence in history'. However, in recent times, at least a few have been coming back to seek for an understanding of 'God's mighty deeds in nature' and to relate them to God's revelation in Christ and his 'mighty deeds in history'.

Twentieth century Science has made it possible to penetrate into nature, far deeper than ever before, to give us a keen sense of depths. To illustrate with an example from Biology, the frog that is commonly dissected in our laboratories: First, there is the external organisation and then there is the internal organisation including a variety of structures—the body systems of different organs and the different tissues making up the organs. When a piece of tissue is subjected to microscopic and sub-microscopic examination, we find at least the following structures—cells, protoplasm, cell-nuclei, chromosomes, genes, crystal chemical elements and compounds, molecules and atoms, atomic-

nuclei, electrons, protons and neutrons and still other sub-atomic particles like photons, mesons and quarks. There is therefore an infinite *qualitative variety* of structures and *great complexity* of organisation. In fact, the most exciting new development of the 20th century has been the discovery that physical matter has great depths and *interiority* and a rich qualitative variety of organised structures at different levels. When we speak of depth and interiority we mean, in terms of proportions, that there are unlimited series of successive levels not necessarily above or below each other, and that there is no bottom if we go downward or top if we go upward. This is true not only of the surface world, but also of space and time. This sense of depth is commonly shared by all branches of science—physics, chemistry, biology, psychology, anthropology, and also the social sciences. This is a vastly different situation from that of the 19th century, when modern science was considered to be without depth and mystery, and the world simple and shallow! Matter, as we know now, exists not only in different forms, but as different kinds and the matter found at interior depths is so different from that of the surface-world that we require totally new conceptions to understand it and radically different laws to deal with it. The structures usually referred to as particles may not be particles at all, being somewhat like particles, somewhat like waves and somewhat like forces. Also, there occur strange kinds of dynamic interactions and happenings in the sea of particles—spontaneous disintegration and creation of new particles, temporary existence, transformation, fusion and fission. Gerald Holton, an American physicist writes that '..... at the bottom of our simple laws there is a vast sea, a flux of chaotic disorder in which these particles continually change and rearrange, a whole 'zoo' of virtual particles that for small intervals of time disobey all the classical laws .....'. Truly, the world of depth is as wonderful as the world above, even the earth and its creatures and the heavens. Ralph Lapp, another physicist, writes, 'Yet for all that we have learned about matter, some of its fundamental mysteries persist .... the more is known the more the mystery deepens'.

There are other depths and interiors—of the human personality, the human mind and soul. Then there are the depths in space. One can go 'upward and outward' to the levels of the planets and the planetary systems, the stars and the stellar systems, the galaxies and the galactic systems and then the super-galaxies and their systems. There are also the depths in time, extending to several billions of years back! Here we see matter in its earthly, evolutionary unfolding and offering ever new potentialities and a marvellous succession of new forms. According to contemporary understanding, matter to begin with existed in the form of elementary particles, which came together to form atoms and molecules. Some of the molecules were long-chained and eventually acquired the ability to reproduce, exhibiting characters that we usually assign to life. Then came the unicellular followed by multicellular organisms, the larger and more complex animals and plants, and finally the mind embodied by man, then social life and community, initiating civilisations. The ascending order is toward increasing complexity and organisation.

What a grand spectacle that is being offered by the scientific world-view! The unboundedness and the rich variety in nature are truly wonderful and surely this view has both depth and mystery. One should not, however, be overwhelmed by all this orderliness in nature without also looking at the destructiveness, inconsistency or disorderliness and ambiguities of nature—such as in the earthquake, flood, fire, famine and storm. But the amazing thing is that the successive major catastrophes in nature, instead of cancelling out each other, actually build upon one another, opening up fresh possibilities for new life and developments, so that



the long-range developmental curve in nature shows a constant upward trend, i.e., toward consciousness and sociality and community, as though these were the actual goals of nature! Is then nature goal-seeking? Does nature reveal a mind or a conscious purpose? Unboundedness, mystery and now goal-seeking . . . what else?!

Would a present-day psalmist reflecting upon the grand spectacle that is offered by the scientific world-view and seeking for meanings intuitively, burst forth into the same song, 'The heavens tell out the glory of God and the vault of heaven reveals his handiwork', 'the earth is the Lord's, and all that is in it' (Ps. 24:1-2)? What will be his reaction when he sees so much that his ancestors have never seen? Would it not be an overwhelming sense of awesome wonder and mystery? Pure, limitless and inexhaustible mystery! To summarise in the words of Prof. Harold K. Schilling, physicist at the Pennsylvania University, U.S.A., '..... a mystery perpetually beckoning and rewarding; a mystery that has yielded to the extraction of immense amounts of knowledge and truth and the resolving of countless mysteries, and yet remains essentially untouched and beyond understanding; a mystery of limitless spatial and temporal immensity, but also of innumerable dimensions of depths, a mystery displaying an infinity of qualitative variety, yet also of incredible cohesiveness and unity; consistency and ambiguity, order and disorder, casual predictability and pure chance'. He suggests that many men are so made that they may not be able to sense and respond to ultimate, transcendent mystery in and beyond nature, unless they come to sense and respond to mystery experienced in nature. Paul Tillich, one of our greatest contemporary theologians, writes, 'Reality, every bit of reality is inexhaustible and points to mystery . . . that transcends the endless series of scientific questions and answers'.

The greatest contribution of contemporary science to human faith 'is the recovery and intensification of genuine mystery'—*mystery, both in its unknown and known quantities*. One speaks of the 'glory of the known'; for instance, to discover and understand the complexity, flux, change and

organisation of physical matter in itself shows the reality of God's creation, declares the glory of God. The tremendous (awe-inspiring) expansion of man's consciousness—his ability to perceive, respond to and understand reality—is of crucial importance to Christian faith. The enlargement of our understanding of the universe reveals to us, not less, but more, of the dynamic power, creativity, mystery and glory of God. To think of God as One with whom we can freely communicate, one who is willing to pour into us his power, one who can be known and yet remains unknown, ever inspiring and ever surprising us with new understanding, new knowledge and new faith—would give us intellectual and spiritual strength and a faith that is courageous, willing to take risks, to move forward with confidence and hope into the future, to be open to new ideas, persons and situations to be free to serve. But to think of God as One whose nature and qualities can be known and defined with considerable certainty, who can be trapped into a closed and fixed doctrinal system of beliefs and practices—would make for a faith which runs in fear and anxiety, is weak and hesitant to use the power and responsibility given to us and fails to bring the prophetic word of God to bear on society and its problems that man's life in the world may be renewed.

The scientific world-view does make a difference to how we shall think of God, and this would naturally make a difference in the way we live, love and hate, work and play, and die.

The sciences discern the glory of God,  
The microscope and telescope reveal his handiwork.  
Day to day brings forth new discoveries,  
Night with night shares its new knowledge.  
There is no speech nor language nor voice  
Yet the music of atoms fills aeons of time  
The genetic code links endless generations!

.....

(CONTRIBUTED)

## DEVOTIONAL

# A Meditation on the Cross and the Beatitudes by a Christian Citizen

As I ponder over 'the wondrous cross on which the Prince (of the Kingdom of Heaven) died, and then gaze at the map of my own Sovereign Republic of India and examine its politics, its economics and its morals, I feel stricken with shame as a Christian citizen, O Christ), that I have not lived up to the new values and motivations of citizenship that you have taught me in your Sermon on the Mount.

As I examine my own 'Christian life' in the light of the cross on which you lived out the Sermon on the Mount, I am appalled at my failings. It is true that I have regularly worshipped you in the church on Sundays. I have sung the hymns with joy as a tenor in the choir, I have repeated the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed without looking at the Prayer Book. I have followed the Word of God closely when the reader was clear. I have listened to the sermon of the priest when my mind was not wandering. But when I meditate upon your cross it rebukes me and asks me: Why do you come to church?

Honestly, God, I am living my life on the Church's working theology of the salvation of my soul, in which the church attendance has become a sort of weekly premium

paid towards the 'Eternal Life Insurance Policy' by which I am assured that at my death my soul will go to heaven and be saved from the eternal fire of hell. But you have given me a stern warning that 'not every person who calls me Lord, Lord, will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven'.

Even my 'giving to the Church' has been a selfish commercial investment with an eye for big dividends. It is based on the wrong understanding of the promise in the Bible that if I give my tithes, you will 'pour out your blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it'.

Selfishness under the guise of charity and self-righteousness under the pretence of religion have been my deadly sins. You have called me a 'hypocrite' and sternly warned me that truthful living and not deceitful professing is what is needed in the Kingdom of Heaven and the Republic of India. Forgive my insincerity and greed, O Lord, and make me a new citizen to build up a new India.

## II

But you have set such high standards, O Lord, How can I reach them? Humanly I find it so difficult.



You tell me it is not impossible to reach the standards if I do not rely upon my own strength but depend on your working within me. You say that you are the vine and I am the branch. Unless you dwell in me and I in you I cannot bear the fruits of your Spirit and reach your standards. That reminds me of my science, Lord. You are like the magnet, and I am like iron. If the iron is in touch with the magnet, it is no longer iron, but the magnet dwells in the iron and gives it a new power. Yes, I see it, Lord: 'You have reached new depths in me'. I abandon myself into the magnetic field of your power. Make me a new citizen of the Kingdom of Christ and give me power to bring a new divine dimension into the secular democracy of India.

### III

Help me, Lord, with the parable of the magnet in my mind to understand the Beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount as the spectrum of the Kingdom of Heaven seen through the prism of the life, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and to personalise them for my own self in the different sectors of life where I touch in society.

\* \* \*

1. What a blessing it would be to me if, with Christ in me, I became aware of the utter poverty of my inner life of the spirit as a private person, as a professional engineer and as a responsible citizen of India,

for then would I be filled with simplicity of spirit, humility of mind and concern for my neighbours; for then would I use my profession to make life richer and happier for the citizens of India and the world; for then would I foster integrity of character, social justice and concern for public good, and make my country a pattern of the Kingdom of Heaven.

2. What a blessing it would be to me if, with Christ in me, I was enabled to bear the sorrow of the soul and the pain of body and mind without murmur;

for then would I experience the soothing comfort and the strengthening courage that come only from God.

3. What a blessing it would be for me if, with Christ in me, I was enabled to show the meekness of non-violence when I face the vaunting of arrogance against me personally;

for then would the power of humility and meekness win the triumph of moral support and public opinion to change the world.

4. What a blessing it would be for me if, with Christ in me, I was always unsatisfied unless I was absolutely righteous and upright according to Christ's standards in my personal life, my professional work and my civic responsibility, to my neighbours, my city, my country and the world;

for then would I get the satisfaction of bringing the peace and happiness of the Kingdom of Heaven into the Republic of India.

5. What a blessing it would be for me if, with Christ in me, I learnt to exercise restraint in the use of power and temper justice with mercy in my public service;

for then could I go to God asking Him to be merciful to me a sinner.

6. What a blessing it would be for me if, with Christ in me, I was enabled to be meticulously sensitive to seek and practise purity in thought, word and deed;
- for then could I really appreciate the majestic purity and holiness of God.

7. What a blessing it would be for me if, with Christ in me, I always sought to bring peace and goodwill among men in all areas of life I touch;

for then would I be a child among the children of God in the family of Bharat Matha.

8. What a blessing it would be for me if, with Christ in me, I was enabled to bear persecution in order to uphold truth and justice;

for then would I be a fellow-sufferer with Christ in bringing the Kingdom of Heaven into the Republic of India.

9. What a supreme blessing it would be for me if, with Christ in me, I was enabled to bear persecution and still rejoice;

for then greater would be the reward of being among special children of God with special missions of God. For so has God revealed His ways in history through prophets, martyrs, saints and apostles.

\* \* \*

Thank you, Lord, for giving me these insights for the understanding of values and for motivations of citizenship in the Kingdom of Heaven. Grant that we the 16 million Christians of India receive your strength individually to be like salt and leaven of Christ-likeness permeating our own little neighbourhoods till the land we love becomes changed increasingly into the pattern of the Kingdom of Heaven.

## Need for Managerial Revolution in the Church

S. EDWARD THILAKARAJ, *Advocate, Coimbatore*

Much is spoken of managerial revolution in government and private undertakings. This is aimed at a better utilisation of the human resources of a unit. The Church through its various agencies manages numerous organisations in addition to the usual quota of schools and hospitals. It is, therefore, logical that, as the Church extends its 'secular' activities, the need for such a revolution is increasingly felt here also.

The Government of India, public sector undertakings, nationalised banks and certain leading private commercial establishments have their own system of recruitment, train-

ing and employment of personnel to man the various arms of their concerns such as administration, production, sales and labour. The Church which has to be perpetually in a process of evolution so as not to become absolute, has varied functions to perform in addition to its routine religious activities. In its attempt at becoming relevant to the present day, the Church finds itself involved in many projects beyond the walls of the mission compound. The advent of the Church of South India a quarter of a century ago, that of the Church of North India recently and the plans for a United Church of India have made the need for



some sort of unified cadre of trained men felt more keenly than ever. The traditional activities of the Church relate to educational institutions, publishing houses and hospitals. The striking phenomenon that highlights the current ecclesiastical scene is the developmental programmes covering industrial enterprises, agricultural complexes, relief operations and the like which the Church has undertaken as part of its ministry. Purely from the point of view of good economics also the Church is venturing into the commercial arena. This will make it increasingly self-sufficient and truly indigenous. The building complexes of 'Arulmanai' in Madras and 'Unity Buildings' in Bangalore wherein are housed numerous business concerns are laudable steps in this direction.

In the absence of trained personnel often these responsibilities are shouldered by clergy in addition to their usual ecclesiastical duties. Instances of a pastor managing a poultry farm or an orphanage are not uncommon. On the other side, one hears of strikes in mission hospitals and labour disputes in our industrial undertakings. Often doctors are put in charge of day-to-day administration of hospitals; as a result they are not in a position to devote their attention fully to the application of their professional skill. A proper and trained management personnel will be better equipped to handle such situations. The industrial undertakings require sound technical know-how and seasoned salesmanship to compete in the highly competitive open market.

On the other hand there is a tendency in Church-sponsored institutions to employ retired personnel. While one does not doubt the ability and devotion to duty of these officers, it must be borne in mind that a young man working for a career will be more productive than a retired officer who, after his career is over, takes up a job just to keep himself going for a few years more. However, the valuable services of these officers can be utilised in the various com-

mittees that govern our Church and regular management jobs can go to trained young men. This will also help in building up a lasting leadership coterie for the Church. Such a scheme will also attract talented Christian young men and give them a more purposeful career. If the youth are thus directly involved in building up the Church, they will eventually generate more dynamism within the Church.

There has to be a machinery for recruitment and training. A central body made up of competent persons from different walks of life should be in charge of recruitment and training. The dioceses can notify to this central body the number of vacancies in different arms. Selection can be through a competitive examination followed by interviews. Then individual aptitudes can be considered and abilities assessed before they are allotted to different fields on an inter-diocesan basis. A common training schedule can be drawn up for all the candidates, and this part of training will precede specialised training. During the common training they can be taught Personnel Management, Business Administration, Labour and Industrial Laws and Public Relations. Institutions like the Christian Medical College, Vellore, and the United Theological College, Bangalore, and organisations like the YMCA and YWCA can provide specialised training courses. Even now a beginning has been made in this direction. The Christian Medical College, Vellore, offers a course in Hospital Management and there is a training programme for Wardens in the United Theological College.

The case for managerial revolution inside the Church is strong. It will make the Church less dependent on foreign know-how and help it to be financially self-supporting. A better co-ordination between various organisations and dioceses can be expected. Modern principles in management and business management can be successfully applied in the functioning of Christian enterprises.

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## The Priorities for a Pastorate Committee

THE REV. E. G. ANANDAM, *Medak*

The presbyter and the pastorate committee in the modern setting are a paradox in the life of the Church. Though created with a good intention, human nature being what it is, the presbyter and the pastorate committee pull in diametrically opposite ways and try to wrest as much power as they can for themselves. With this exercise, instead of going forward with its mission, the Church lands in a deadlock or a tug of war.

God created the Church with a mission—to show forth the excellencies of Him who has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light. Our Lord commissions his disciples to go all over the world and preach the gospel to every creature. To this end the Church has been created and to this end the Christians exist. But, as in the parable of St. Paul about a civil war between the body and the spirit, the disciples were longing for mundane things while the Master was pointing to the heavenly things. The disciples asked our Lord before his departure, for the Kingdom and the Lord, instead of giving them the Kingdom, told them to go and preach the gospel to all the world. The Lord wants to give ministry to the Church. But the people want authority and power to rule.

Our Lord took special care and extra effort to teach his disciples that the real greatness lies in service and not in exercising authority. But men would never learn that lesson. 'The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the

vainglory of life' are still the major attractions among the members of the Church. The eyes of most are set on the offices that bring a motor-car and an impressive house and large sums of money and other such privileges which are receptacles of power. Power and money are the much sought after things in the Church, and in the quest of these, the mission of the Church is lost sight of.

Most often we find in the pastorate committee members who got elected by canvassing for themselves. Sometimes they buy votes. We have heard stories too that the voters were wooed by intoxicating drinks. If such are the voters and the members got elected by them, I wonder what kind of service we can expect of them. Our Lord, after a long prayer chose twelve disciples and one of them turned out to be a traitor. When we find a traitor among our Lord's own chosen, what of the body that comes in by itself using all sorts of fraudulent means!

All those who are in the Christian fold are not saints. In the parable of the wheat and tares our Lord envisages the possibility of having good men and bad men together in the Church until the end of the age. The parable of the dragnet with wholesome and unwholesome fish also says the same thing. In a Church of such mixed men, democracy is not the best form of government. The democratic elective system gives room for parties and with the onslaught of the party spirit, the peace and love among men in the



Church is shattered. The whole world invades the Church with all its masquerading deceitful standards and the people who got on to the committees by using such standards are also guided by the same. When the rank and the file of the committee is constituted with such men, you can turn out very little spiritual work. Some people may say that the people need to be educated in these things and unless they go through these things they have no chance to learn. Then they might say that, with experience and education, people learn to act better. Yes, with education and experience one learns to do a thing in a better way, but there is no guarantee that education and experience make one a better Christian. St. Paul in one of his Letters indicates that, in the last days, people filled with all sorts of vices will abound in the Church and our pastorate committees elected on democratic system are examples. When the supreme body of the pastorate consists of such men, can it fulfil the mission of the Church? If we take the mission of the Church seriously, we need to have in the pastorate committee men who are committed to God and who are of good Christian character and such a committee cannot come into existence with the present democratic way of election except by nomination either by a Bishop or by a body of devout men who are appointed for the purpose.

The Church has to reconsider the constitution of the pastorate committees and the method of electing the members for it.

As to the duties of the pastorate committee, to my mind, they are mainly two which are equally important. One is to cater to the spiritual needs of the members of the Church and the second is to evangelize the world.

As to the spiritual needs the pastorate committee must make arrangements for the regular worship which provides spiritual food and nourishment for the members of the Church. The Committee should aim at making every Christian a worshipping Christian. Besides the public worship it should encourage private worship in the families.

The committee should also arrange for Bible Study. All the Christians should be instructed in the fundamentals of religion. The Bible exhorts everyone to equip himself with all knowledge and the study of the Bible gives him the necessary knowledge.

Again, for the spiritual nurture, the pastorate committee should make provision for cottage prayer meetings and give the Christians a sense of belonging and a sense of security that the Church takes care about them.

One of the most important duties of a pastorate committee is to take spiritual care of its young people. Sunday schools and youth meetings should be regularly conducted so that the youth may be won for Christ and all the young people own Jesus Christ as their Saviour. The pastorate committee should realize that the future of the Church is

much dependent upon the present day youth. Therefore it should cater for their spiritual needs and harness the youth force for Christ and also ensure for the Church for all time a virile leadership from among the youth leaders.

Further, for the spiritual nurture of the congregation, the pastorate committee can arrange retreats and revival meetings and thus see that the members are edified in their faith and that they are able to stand on their own legs to give answer to anyone that questions them with regard to their faith.

Now an equally important duty of the pastorate committee is to evangelize the world. The Church exists for the witness to the saving love of God. It gives witness to the gospel, by its active existence and by its active evangelistic service. As for active existence, worship and other spiritual exercises contribute to it. The active evangelistic work is to be carried out with vigour and determination.

It has been a sad experience of the pastors that they get very few people among the congregations who show any interest in the evangelistic work. The fault may be that the members are not rightly oriented towards the work. But the members cannot take any shelter behind this for their inertia in the evangelistic work. Every Christian is supposed to be an active evangelist. This is in response to the love of God shown to us. The pastorate committees should give top priority for evangelism. We have plenty of people in the Church who vie with each other to become treasurers, secretaries and other officers in the pastorate. But no one comes forward to organize the evangelistic work, nor would any one willingly come forward to take part in it when organized. This is a sad affair in the life of the Church. Really the Kingdom of God may be said to have come when a pastorate committee takes up the evangelistic work as its most important duty and organizes it effectively. It should not be spasmodic but be a regular activity. The Church exists for evangelistic work and its life is guaranteed by this activity.

For the life and the work of the Church we need to have money. We need to have funds for the support of the ministry and to carry out many of the programmes of the Church. The Pastorate Committee should give thought to have a regular income. This is also very important. If all Christians become giving Christians we shall have enough money to cater for all needs. Our Christians have not learnt to give liberally. Sometimes when we examine the contributions list, we shall find that many of the pastorate committee members have not contributed anything and some only a paltry sum. The committee should teach its members to give liberally and demonstrate the same by their own example.

The pastorate committees are given a lot of power in the Churches. If this power could be translated into service for the glory of God then a rich harvest can be reaped.

## Famine and the Church

P. L. SAMUEL, *Bevinakalle, Mysore*

The year 1972-1973 has been a bleak year for farm production. Owing to adverse seasonal conditions cultivation has largely been a failure in some parts of the country. Drought has resulted in famine. People have little food to eat and many cannot earn enough to buy foodgrains and other necessities. The rising prices of all commodities have made life miserable in many rural areas. Drinking water is not available in some places. Even the cattle suffer as there is no fodder or water.

In Mysore State, from what I have seen and heard, there is famine in some districts and it is acute in Bidar

and Gulbarga districts. It is the rural people who suffer the most. The price of foodgrains such as jowar and bajra, the staple food of the villagers, has gone very high. There is news of people who have sold their cattle at very cheap rates to provide food for themselves and their children. Others have bartered cattle for food which would last for only two or three days. Some have migrated to distant towns and cities. Even those who have migrated have suffered as the people in the towns and cities have taken advantage of the ignorance and the helplessness of the rural people.

Water is not available in the interior villages. Wells have



dried up. To those who can afford to buy, water is available in small quantities. In many cases a couple of pots of water (about thirty litres) has to be used by a family each day for washing, drinking and cooking.

Cattle wealth is the only wealth which has utility value in the rural parts. Cattle provide manure, hard labour and milk to the cultivator. In the famine areas, as fodder is not available for cattle, in order to avoid seeing them starve, they have been driven away by their owners to enable them to find something to eat. Unable to find food, in many cases, the cattle have gone back to the houses of the owners. Unable to maintain them the villagers have sold them at very cheap rates. Unscrupulous buyers have taken the cattle to distant places and sold them for huge profits.

These are a few instances of what is taking place in the famine areas. What is true in the Mysore State will also be true in all the other states where there is famine.

The Government is doing its best to mitigate suffering. Famine relief works have been started. Wells are being deepened and new wells are dug. Fodder for cattle is transported from distant places. But corruption and nepotism being rampant the help does not reach the really deserving and the people continue to suffer.

The Ramakrishna Mission and other religious and humanitarian organisations are doing what little they can to serve the suffering people. Gruel centres have been opened, the sick are cared for and cattle pounds have been arranged. But the activity of the church in this situation is not evident.

The Church is introverted. The members of the church are deeply involved in organisational work and they have little time for service. In the Church of South India, in some dioceses, there are committees with very attractive and promising names such as Famine Relief Committee, Ground Water Resources Committee and Social Concerns Committee. These committees regularly meet, pass resolutions and sometimes distribute food-grains, oil and milk powder

obtained through the Christian Agency for Social Action, Relief and Development. The distribution is mostly done in areas where Christians live. The commodities used for distribution are contributed by people in foreign countries. Little is done by these committees using local resources and members of the church.

Jesus described His Service to the blind, the captive and the oppressed and showed clearly that His followers should do these things and proclaim the gospel by feeding the hungry, caring for the oppressed and down-trodden, visiting and serving the sick and by following the example of the Good Samaritan.

Jesus said that He came not to be served but to serve, but we His followers in this country mostly desire to be served by the Missionary Societies and other organisations such as CASA and Kindernothilfe. It is high time that the Christians in India should get ready to serve and to suffer and do such things as would proclaim to our neighbours that God through Christ has entrusted to us the ministry of reconciliation.

Our country is a Democracy. The basis of true democracy is the love of God. The spontaneous and immediate result of our love of God becomes evident in our love for our neighbours. Our faith should not become a thing of the church building but should be a matter of our whole life.

These are ecumenical days. There is a broad understanding and co-operation in the service of the Church. Is it possible for Christians of all denominations including the Roman Catholics to show to our neighbours in this country that we love God and love our neighbours like ourselves by organising practical service to the suffering people in the famine areas?

May be in places where our own churches and congregations are affected by famine, appeals have gone to the foreign Missionary Societies for help. But what is required is our own effort to give and to serve.

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## A Gay Troubadour of God: Svak S. Selvaretnam\*

S. KULANDRAN, *Jaffna*

Seldom has anyone inspired such genuine and unstinted affection in the hearts of all who knew him, not merely here but in many lands of the world, as the Rev. S. Selvaretnam, who passed away on Thursday, last week.

Genuine affection within a small circle is one of the commonest things of life, and something without which life would be unthinkable. Parents have affection for their children and children for their parents; this is biological, that is, it depends on blood. In legal documents this is called 'natural love and affection', because it is part of nature. Husbands love their wives and vice-versa. This may be romantic or physical and is certainly dependent on participation in many common tasks. Friends love each other, either because their interests coincide or supplement one another. All this, however, is confined to small circles.

Selvaretnam was loved by everyone who knew him and inspired a genuine attachment, wherever he went. This was due to a combination of two qualities generally supposed to be irreconcilable. In the first place, he was not merely a religious man but a holy man. He not merely lived in extreme poverty but practised the severest austerities. He rose everyday at 2 o'clock in the morning and usually had only one (vegetarian) meal a day (though he had no objection

to unlimited cups of tea). He sometimes spent days of entire silence and would often spend a good deal of time in solitary communion with God. He went about in the cloak of a *sanniyasin* and was usually barefooted. It made no difference to him whether he was in Jaffna or conversing with Queen Wilhelmina of Holland (though on such an occasion he would relax to the point of wearing sandals).

If Selvaretnam's holiness was deep, one had to know him well, before one could be sure. His holiness was something to be deduced—though somewhat easily—from his life and habits. But the quality about him that almost hit anyone in the eye was his irrepressible gaiety. This needed no deduction. He could not have been in any company without this overflowing, almost hilarious, joy, bringing everybody within its orbit. Even those who did not know that he was a holy man would never have been in any doubt about his jollity.

It was the combination of these two qualities that gave Selvaretnam his irresistible appeal. Here was a holy man who could not merely laugh like other people, but laugh more than they. This combination might have looked peculiar; but it was a natural, indeed a necessary, combination. 'Rejoice, I say unto you again, rejoice' says

\* With acknowledgements to Bishop Kulandran and *The Morning Star* from which the excerpts have been made—Ed.



St. Paul. The meaning of the word 'gospel' is good news; and everyone who hears and believes in it is expected to be joyful.

Selvaretnam was the son of the late Mr. and Mrs. G. S. Subramaniam. Mr. Subramaniam was first a Catechist in the Methodist Mission but later joined the C. M. S. Selvaretnam had his Secondary School education at Jaffna Central College, where for a short time I had the privilege of being his teacher 53 years ago. He was for sometime at Jaffna College in 1926 and joined Serampore Theological College in 1927 where from 1928 to 1931, he and I were classmates.

At Serampore he was extremely good in his Greek and was a favourite of the Rev. G. H. C. Angus, who taught us Greek; but whether he ever looked into his Greek Testament after leaving Serampore is doubtful. Both among teachers and students he was known for his gaiety which never seemed to ebb. Any student who showed a tendency to undue seriousness became his sure victim. Throughout his life Selvaretnam had the gift of giving a comic turn to any situation, however unpromising.

Selvaretnam and I entered the ministry of the Jaffna Council of the S.I.U.C. in May 1931. He was posted to Vaddukoddai as Assistant to the Rev. E. T. Williams, but was soon shifted to Araly when the Rev. K. E. Thambirajah moved to Tellipallai. Araly at that time was full of a large number of highspirited young people, the Kathiravelpillai family alone contributing no less than four members to the company. Wherever it was, the Araly Parsonage in his time was always a scene of the most uproarious hilarity and merriment.

Selvaretnam's behaviour in the presence of his sedate elders in the ministry was not such as to set their minds at rest; nor was it very much better at Council Meetings. Here he would adopt his favourite trick of using particular phrases in irrelevant contexts. Generally, in the presence of his elderly colleagues he became ostentatiously hilarious (some of the most sedate he kept teasing to the end of their days). Being constantly driven to despair, they did the only thing they could; they kept postponing his Ordination, which finally came off only in 1936.

It was around 1937 that Selvaretnam felt that the time had come for him to give effect to his dream of setting up an Ashram. The project needed at least a nominal organisational sponsor; and the obvious body for it was the Jaffna Christian Union. For years this institution had been monopolised by a few hoary veterans, who had elected themselves to the various offices, because few cared to challenge their authority. If they had been in charge, they would have made nothing of such an unheard of thing as a Christian Ashram. But in 1936, fortunately for Selvaretnam, partly by accident and partly by the diplomatic skill of D. T. Niles, all the veterans were ousted from their places and a younger set installed. The Rev. E. M. Weaver, the new President, though not very young, was sympathetic; I was Secretary and, though young, was, however, not at all sympathetic, feeling that such a project had no place in Protestantism; nevertheless, I was too close to Selvaretnam to be a real stumbling block. Other members of the Committee, like the Rev. R. C. P. Welch and Mr. W. D. Niles, were solidly in favour and so the project came into effect in August 1939.

In the historical account of the Ashram which I contributed to its Silver Jubilee Souvenir, I said that the essentials of an Ashram were a man and a tree; a man sitting under a tree. Any man could, of course, sit under a tree; but if it was to be an Ashram, he had to be a holy man. About the fact that the man in this case was holy there never was any doubt. So the Ashram took shape round Selvaretnam.

Those who look at the Ashram now will see a cluster of neat little buildings in the midst of shady trees, a home of peace and serenity. They do not know how the whole thing had to start from scratch. I believe the Methodist Church gave some money for the purchase of the land, which was then a wilderness. For months it was doubtful if any water could be found in it; for a much longer period the task of making any tree grow on it seemed beyond our power. Little by little, however, things began to get right, buildings began to come up and trees began to grow. Selvaretnam never asked for money but money came. The history of the growth of the Ashram may be written, but the miracles that lay behind every bit of it were known only to the few who were very close to Selvaretnam.

The Ashram soon assumed a place in the life of the community, because it fulfilled the requirement of an Ashram. Here was a holy man, who not merely sought God or went to Him frequently, but a man who always lived with Him and never got out of His company. If such a man was wont to crack jokes and tell humorous stories, it only brought him more within their orbit. They knew that he could afford to do it and were grateful that he was willing to do it. It endeared him all the more to them.

As time went by, he seemed to become a necessary figure at all important functions. I used to twit him about a celibate like him presuming to give advice to couples at weddings; but, of course, it was not his advice they wanted but his presence. Often through the years I have gone to meetings and found a *Devaram* by him wangled into the programme. At funerals his singing of his colleague's well-known song became an almost invariable feature. It was as if people had come to feel that something would be lacking in a ceremony if he did not take part in it.

The chief fault that was found against Selvaretnam in Jaffna was that he went away too frequently from the Ashram. But what was considered a fault in Jaffna was considered a virtue and an act of kindness by those outside Jaffna. They felt grateful that he refused to be a slave of geography. Just because the Ashram happened to be in Jaffna, people elsewhere felt that it was no reason why a holy man like him should be tied down to that one place. So he was in constant demand not merely in various parts of this Island but in many other parts of the world. In fact, at the time of his death he had made all arrangements to go to South America. There are hardly any Continents to which he had not gone and where he had not been received with feelings of affection.

Looking at Selvaretnam's life one cannot help being reminded of another figure in the history of the Church; and that is St. Francis of Assisi. There is in them both the same combination of severe austerities with a spontaneous gaiety; nor is the resemblance accidental, for, I think, Selvaretnam deliberately made St. Francis his model.

But St. Francis seems to have been a more austere figure, having none of the reckless abandon of Selvaretnam's gaiety. It may be that we do not have a 'close-up view' of St. Francis and are compelled to see him through the eyes of pious chroniclers, but the probability is that their picture is correct. St. Francis was more austere, because he was under the shadow of his Church, conscious of allegiance to Bishops, Cardinals and Popes. Church affiliation sat very loose on Selvaretnam. Francis attended the Lutheran Council of 1215; Selvaretnam would have tried to turn the whole thing into a hilarious joke. It was only at the end of his life that he was beginning to realise the need to get into close relation to the Church.

By temperament Selvaretnam was a lonely but gay troubadour of God, wending his way to God merrily, but alone, except that he was already in the company of God.



# Higher Education in the Seventies: Crisis and Hope

*[Concluded from the last issue]*

Consider, again, the way we have dithered over the question of reforming examinations. At the best of times their reliability was in doubt. With large-scale cheating, abetted by academics and often condoned by authority, the procedures of evaluation have been reduced to an unmeaning absurdity. Proposals for the reform of examinations have been plentiful. They are available in numberless reports, and have been the subject of discussion in numberless conferences, seminars, and workshops. But nothing has really changed.

Shirking a frontal attack on what calls for urgent change in the areas of curriculum-making, teaching methods and examinations, there is some danger that in the coming months we shall expend our energies on matters of lesser consequence. One of them will be the effort to adopt a uniform pattern for the duration of school and college courses throughout the country. The present disparities disturb the tidy minds of statisticians. The proposal aimed at uniformity has not been preceded by any study of the comparative quality of the university degrees obtained after fifteen years of formal study in school and college as against fourteen (as in Uttar Pradesh) and sixteen (as in Assam). Also, no effort has been made to indicate clearly the proficiencies and skills that the completion of the three stages of ten, plus two, plus three, would represent. Without such clear indication of the standards aimed at, the proposed restructuring would mean no more than adding another year of wastefulness to the existing fourteen. Everyone knows that the standards that are currently being achieved, could be achieved in much shorter time than is expended on them. The results secured by non-collegiate candidates who take examinations after part-time study, regularly proclaim this embarrassing fact.

Another matter on which we shall be expending a lot of nervous energy in the coming months is the idea of student participation in decision-making. It is not a propitious sign that the slogan-mongers who are currently enthusing about this avoid all mention of the one area where such participation would be most exacting and worth-while, namely, of curricular growth. The present trends that allow the slowest runner to set the pace of learning may be aggravated if the type of leadership that students have thrown up in recent times makes academic decisions. These trends will have to be reversed and the ablest students should share with teachers the responsibility for correcting the recession in academic growth that our universities have been experiencing. Student participation in decision-making should itself be a daring and demanding educational programme, instead of being a craven exercise in political appeasement.

My fear is that, even if the will to change were genuine, nothing much would be possible under the absolute structure of our universities. Whatever relevance this structure may have had in the past, it can no longer sustain any meaningful programme of higher education. The system offends against two basic requirements for a true university, namely, a capacity for self-regulation, and a high sense of public accountability. Our public speeches notwithstanding, conformity is still the basic academic virtue, and the wonder is that under such a discouraging system, some colleges have been able to do so much, and some of the students able to do so well. But a system should not base the justification for its continuance on the capacity of some of its constituents to transcend its minimum requirements. A more positive incitement to innovate and experiment, and to break the academic look-step, is called for.

The way out, we shall be told, has already been indicated in that depository of educational wisdom, namely, the Edu-

cation Commission's Report. They have recommended the development of autonomous colleges, and even suggested that the University Grants Commission should proceed forthwith to choose at least fifty colleges for such status. That the recommendation rated only a sub-paragraph in the Report, compared to the zealous elaboration given to the idea of 'major' universities, gives some indication of the degree of importance the Commission gave to the idea. The way they suggested for implementing it shows that they did not even understand the idea. The fact that nothing has been accomplished along these lines during the six years since the publication of the Report would further indicate that nobody in authority was serious about it, or that the idea was impracticable.

The basic error was in presuming that the autonomous college would be an exceptional type, and not the general rule under the new dispensation. Even in matters relating to the life of the mind, which is what education is about, we do not seem to be able to get away from notions of status and privilege. And consequently, resistance is already building up against the idea of the autonomous college. In Delhi, the Teachers' Association has already expressed its suspicion of the idea, as a sinister way of introducing class distinctions among colleges.

The independence of colleges, in regard to curricula, teaching procedures and examinations, should not be a special status conferred by authority on a favoured few, however splendid the criterion for conferring the status be. Instead, it should be a challenge thrown by the university to every college in the system. The procedure could be similar to what the British Government under Attlee decided to do in January 1947, in regard to independence for India. The Congress and the Muslim League were locked in conflict, and there were suspicions about the role that the British Viceroy, Lord Wavell, was playing. Attlee's solution took even the nationalist leaders by surprise. He decided that, on a given date, the British were quitting, whatever the shape of the government that the people of the sub-continent decided on. This, he reckoned, was the only way for people to mature from squabbling and theorising into full, practical responsibility.

Something similar should happen in our affiliating universities. In fact, what is urgently needed is the scrapping of the concept of affiliation, which has outlived its relevance. Every large university should be an association of colleges, each independent in regard to curricula, teaching arrangements and examinations. Any tendency towards cheapening degree requirements still further, if it were at all conceivable, would be curbed by the constraints imposed by academic opinion, and by the proficiencies needed for different categories of employment or for courses of further studies. In the beginning, many colleges may not be able, in terms of personnel and equipment, to take on the new responsibilities. The university could help such institutions by laying down the minimum requirements relating to curricula, teaching and examinations, that would qualify a college for membership of the association of colleges; it could even continue to perform for the weaker colleges the affiliation functions of the present until they are able to mature into independence.

I do not wish to minimise the difficulties that such a departure from the present dispensation would present. In my view, however, there is no alternative to facing those difficulties and making an effort to overcome them, for possibilities of doing good work under the present system have



been exhausted, and whatever illusions went into the founding and maintenance of an ever-increasing number of colleges in recent years, cannot sustain a meaningful system of higher education any longer. Resistance to the idea of independent colleges will come under the guise of a concern for academic standards. If the concern were genuine, what has it done for the standards of the present!

The real source of the resistance is the average educator's fear of freedom. He shares it with most other people.

Dorothy Day, the Christian revolutionary, once said, 'Freedom—how men hate it and chafe under it, how unhappy they are with it.' Any yet, without freedom, there can be no learning. Without freedom, there can be no higher education. The crisis we are dealing with is the product of the erosion of freedom, an abdication of the sense of being in charge of oneself. And the hope that we should cling to is that we shall be able to emerge into freedom, if we have the will to do so.

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## Belief in the Resurrection\*

THE REV. P. D. PETER, *Valparai*

Many years ago, in one of the religious broadcasts in Tamil, the preacher was telling the listeners of a little girl, Pushpa, who, on Good Friday night, prayed as follows before going to bed, 'Dear Jesus, please don't forget to rise on Sunday morning, otherwise we will be put to shame before our neighbours and friends because they will think we are liars and all our hopes will be gone.' The same thing is said by St. Paul to the Corinthians in his first epistle to them in the fifteenth chapter in verses 14 and 17: 'And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.' The resurrection of Jesus was necessary for the efficacy of our faith, for the efficacy of preaching and for forgiveness of sins.

The Apostles themselves were slow to believe the resurrection: 'And they, when they heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not . . . And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them . . . Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.' (Mark 16: 11, 13 & 14). It was not an easy thing to believe the resurrection, but our Lord definitely told the doubting Thomas (John 20: 29) 'Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.' We certainly belong to that category of persons who have not seen and yet have believed, 'because we have not seen our Lord's earthly body, and yet we believe in his resurrection. The resurrection was necessary for the efficacy of our faith'. In the four verses in I Corinthians 15: 14-17 we find St. Paul referring to faith twice in the context of the resurrection. We also read in Hebrews 11: 1 that 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.'

The Apostle Paul says that the resurrection was necessary for the efficacy of our preaching. Again we see our Lord's

words in Mark 16: 15 'And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.' Soon after upbraiding them with their unbelief (in the resurrection appearances of our Lord) our Lord said, 'Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.' The preaching is the direct result of the faith in the resurrection. And the disciples 'went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them.' The preaching of the resurrection of the dead was mocked by some, (Acts 17: 32) but yet the Apostles persisted in preaching the resurrection of our Lord. Denial of the resurrection would mean overthrow of the gospel. In such a case preaching and faith would be void of reality. Moreover, the Apostles would have spoken falsely of God if there was no resurrection since, if the dead never rise, God had not, as the Apostles asserted, raised up Christ. The faith of Christians would then be useless.

St. Paul says he handed down to the Corinthian church the tradition he had received—Christ's death for sin according to the scriptures (Isaiah 53). We see in Acts 8: 32-35 Philip preached Christ Jesus to the eunuch starting from this passage in Isaiah. If there is no resurrection of Christ then no saving significance could be attached to his death. Further those who had already fallen asleep in Christ would have perished. The Christian gospel for man is bound up with a Christ who had died for man's sins and risen again.

If we are persons who in this life had set our hopes on Christ, and for whom there is no fruition of our hopes in that case, because our hope has neither basis nor fruition, we should be of all men the most to be pitied. In Romans 8: 32-34 we see that, 'It is God who pronounces acquittal: then who can condemn? It is Christ—who died, and, more than that, was raised from the dead—who is at God's right hand, and indeed pleads our cause' (N.E.B.). Thank God that we can, with St. Paul, assert 'But now is Christ risen from the dead' (I Cor. 15: 20).

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\*Written as the devotional page for Easter (April) but held over in the press in the general dislocation of the regular printing of Numbers of the *Churchman* since March—Ed.



# The Karnataka Clergy Conference on Current Ecumenical Issues

What are the reasons that up to now there is little contact between the priests of the various Churches? What are the difficulties in making Holy Communion a means for Christian Unity? Are the present ecclesiastical structures adequate enough to face the challenges of the Modern Society?

These crucial ecumenical questions were the points of discussion at an ecumenical conference of the clergymen of the Roman Catholic and C.S.I. Churches convened by the Ecumenical Christian Centre, Whitefield. About sixty participants sponsored by the different Dioceses of Mysore State stayed for four days at the spacious campus of the Ecumenical Christian Centre deliberating on the vital issues affecting the life and witness of the Church today. It was for the first time that such an ecumenical seminar was held exclusively for the Parish Priests of the Karnataka area.

Several discussion groups wrestled with the questions raised in the main addresses. There was common consensus that the present division is painful. It was acutely felt when a section of the participants could not take part in the Lord's Supper at the time of its celebration according to the rites of another Church. 'Our love and oneness pulls me forward, but the law of the Church pulls me back', said one priest after attending a Eucharist Service. Lack of proper understanding and respect for others' view-points was said to be the biggest hurdle in the Church's common witness.

The question of Inter-Religious (e.g. Hindus and Christians) and inter-Church marriages (Protestants and Roman Catholics) attracted a lot of discussion. There was a strong opinion that the Church must not approach this question just in the doctrinal or traditional, legalistic way. In view of the changing patterns of family and society, it was felt

that the parish priests must be 'open' and sympathetic to such marriages. Some participants felt that in our anxiety to safeguard and protect the Church structures we often forget men and women for whom the Church exists.

There was a serious attempt to re-define the role of the Church because ecumenism comprehends the whole of mankind all over the world. In this context a Parish is not simply the administrative unit of a particular church but the needs and demands of the entire community in a village or town must be taken into consideration by the Parish Priest.

The quest of man for dignity and better living conditions and the responsibility of the Church in this regard were a point of discussion. The Conference was of the opinion that the Churches must take seriously the challenges posed by the political, social and economic revolutions of our time. There was a unanimous opinion that the Church must become an effective instrument of change in society.

The main addresses in the conference were: Changing Pattern of Family and the Pastoral Problems, What does Ecumenism mean? Theology of Eucharist and Inter-Communion, World Council of Churches? Contribution to Ecumenism, Roman Catholic Approach to Ecumenism and Role of the Parish in Modern Indian Society. There was a Panel discussion on 'Parish Priest and Ecumenism'.

We speak of Ecumenism from House-tops. But how many priests in the real local situations are conscious of it? This Regional Ecumenical Conference was an eye-opener to the need of ecumenical thinking and understanding at the grass-roots level.

*E.C.C. Press Release, Whitefield.*

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## The Significance of Worship Today

THE REV. S. KANAVALI, *Tumkur*

### Meaning of Worship

"Worship" (from Saxon *weorthscipe*, "worthship"), is homage—the attitude and activity designed to recognize and describe the worth of the person or a thing to which the homage is addressed. So worship embraces the whole of life. Its meaning, therefore, is very great. In Christian parlance 'worship' is used to describe divine worship. In all respects worship is the response of the creature to the Creator. It is the purpose of the Creator that men should worship Him. Man exists for the glory of God.

We need not go into the very rich vocabulary to find out the meaning of 'Worship'. All the words mean, one way or the other, to express the relationship between God and man: to serve, to adore, to draw near, to seek the face of God, etc. The Psalmist succinctly defines the character and purpose of worship. For example:

'One thing I seek:

that I may be constant in the house of the Lord  
all the days of my life,  
to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord  
and to seek Him in his temple' (27:4)

Further the Psalmist calls his Lord aloud:

'Come, my heart has said,  
'seek his face'  
I will seek thy face, O Lord,  
do not hide from me'—(27:8)

'Worship,' therefore, in its proper sense, is man's recognition of the existence and presence of God.

It goes without saying that man's worship of God is conditioned by the truth of his knowledge of God. As his knowledge, so his worship, too. If his knowledge of God is false and imperfect, then his morality is defective. So true and real worship of God is always dependent upon the real understanding of God.

The true understanding of God has been disclosed to us in and through the life and work of Jesus Christ. He manifests God and defines the reality of man and shows the possibilities and limitations of the world. He is the incarnate Son of God, who is also the Son of Man. He humbles Himself and in obedience accepted even death—the death of the cross. 'Therefore God raised him to the heights and bestowed on him the name above all names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and every tongue confess, "Jesus Christ is Lord" to the glory of the Father.'

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Phil. 2:8-10. Worship, therefore, is always 'through Jesus Christ our Lord'. He is the same yesterday, today and forever.

He governs the worship of the Church in all ages, cultures and situations. This is the differentia, the distinguishing mark of Christian worship.

### What our worship really does

At the outset Christian worship does two things: It celebrates God's mighty acts in Jesus Christ; it draws us into communion with him.

As we are aware of the fact that there are several liturgical forms of worship, all include the Word of God and the Sacraments in their worship. In the Word read and preached, in the sacraments administered, the presence of Jesus Christ is manifested. If the sermon plays such a great role in drawing men into communion with God, the traditional way of sermon prepared and preached by one man is increasingly under question.

In baptism with understanding of dying and rising with Christ the baptized is given the way to the Father through the Holy Spirit. In this way he is initiated into a new life of worship of God and service to man.

The essential meaning of Christian worship is revealed in the Eucharist, because the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ given for the remission of sins is essentially a communion meal in which Christians share in His life.

So, for Christians, worship in praise and thanksgiving is a privilege to take part in the joy, the peace and love of God which is revealed in Jesus Christ.

I should like to mention two more things:

One, when worship brings privileges it also demands certain responsibilities. The Christians are called to participate fully in Jesus Christ's reconciling work among men. There are demonic forces in and around the Church. These forces surely alienate man from his Creator as well as from his fellowmen. What are these demonic forces of our day? Narrow nationalism, arrogant sectarianism, racism or castism, war or oppression, famine or disease, poverty or wealth and bribery and deceit. Our worship must disclose to us these forces around us, more so if we are governed by these forces.

In worship we enter God's battle. In Gethsemane, Jesus had to fight a great Battle. The victory belongs to Jesus. But 'we have to put on all armour which God provides, so that we may be able to stand firm against the devices of the devil . . . cosmic powers . . . the authorities and potentates of this world . . . Eph. 6: 10-18.

Two, Christian worship helps men by calling them to die to themselves so as to be born again in another—in Christ. It is a continuous process. As many times as possible Christians come together for worship they realize their relation

with God is renewed every time. As long as their worship is in the Spirit and truth the power of the indwelling Spirit enables them to live a life of eternal hope of glory. Our worship is eschatological. It is related to the End in which God's purpose will be completed. 'It is the fellowship of humanity redeemed in Christ and awaiting the fulfilment of that redemption, and therefore constantly submitted to the judgement and renewal of divine revelation in the present. (see 1 Pet. 4: 17).

### What our worship fails to do

Recently I saw two women taking holy rounds around a shrine. I could hear them speak loudly something bad about their own neighbour. But whenever they reached the front part of the shrine they bowed down their head in the customary way and afterwards continued their talk. So also with our worship as we sing hymns or lyrics, hear the word of God, recite the creed and say the prayers.

Our worship fails to overcome its stereotyped forms. Most of our regular Church-going children imitate for fun the way in which the pastor conducts the worship. The forms of worship and the methods of preaching make no effective impact upon the worshipper. Worship altogether becomes monotonous and meaningless. It is a great pity that our worship fails to find out new forms which are more suitable to our Indian culture and to the best interest of the present-day youth. God wants to create a new heaven and a new earth. If we are really co-workers with God, how do we participate in His work of making all things new? As far as worship is concerned the forms of worship should change rapidly, for this change is inherent in life. Under these fresh forms one must recognize Him who is always the same.

Our worship fails to bring out its significance to the whole of life. Between Sunday and other days, Church and slums and festivals and poverty, ritual religion and practical life, there is a vast gulf. What we preach and hear and administer and receive have no real connection with our day to day life. There is a big wall-text board in one of the Church compounds which reads: 'Love thy neighbour as thyself'. But the same Church members fight against one another in front of this wall-text.

Our worship fails to challenge the justice of the world. Within and outside the Church, especially in a country like India, self-interest prevails and thereby corruption. Does not Christian worship contain an element of protest? Our worship must be realistic.

We must work out our 'Worship'. In rural India where the poorest people in the world live, worship does not mean any more solitary self-redemption. Let us not fall into the danger of emphasising the concept that 'Work is Worship'. But at the same time let us not forget that our worship embraces the whole of life.



# Letters to the Editor

## CHRISTIANS AND THE CINEMA

Dear Sir,

You did well to devote the March 1973 issue of our Church magazine to the above subject, in order to draw the attention of your leaders, especially in India, to the very large place the cinema has come to occupy in our lives and to the enormous amount of money which is wasted on 'going to the cinema' by people who can ill afford to waste any money. That such people derive real pleasure from seeing our South Indian pictures and that they are really helped for the time being (not less than three hours) to forget their miserable existence and their economic worries cannot be denied. Nor can it be gainsaid that the cinema has become the most popular form of entertainment at the present time and that it can be well used for conveying information and can both provide clean entertainment and pleasure, though popular taste has now been so perverted that such films will not pay their way. As a form of comparatively cheap entertainment which can be and is being used as such by people who have little other pleasure in living, it has no rival and is not likely to have unless and until the stage is once again begun to be used for the same purposes. That people who cannot afford to waste money do so by too frequent attendance at cinema theatres cannot also be denied.

But the whole point of your having devoted a whole issue of our Church magazine to the cinema was not to get people to think of the platitudes I have indulged in above, but to make Christians think how far they are justified in going to the cinema or in permitting their teen-age and adolescent children to see a picture once a week, without pausing to think what effect that particular picture is likely to have on the minds of their children. It is well known that pictures marked as reserved for adults only are the ones that are most popular with these teen-agers. Your intention in having used the March issue for this subject was to make Christians here, and elsewhere, think. In this you do not appear to have succeeded. Only five gentlemen, all of them highly respectable and all of whom are experts on the subject have written articles for you. Prof. Thomas, Mr. Vasanthan, Mr. (Soon to be on the way to become the Rev.) B. J. Premiah, Mr. Augustine Thiriyegadasan, a trainee in the Indian Economic Service. (Servant of the Holy Trinity) and Mr. Theodore Bhaskaran, a high official in the Postal department. The knowledge that they possess about the cinema at the present day appears to be vast and to have been acquired. Each of them has, however, tried his best to whitewash a black-dog, as Tenali Raman is said to have once tried to do and was admired by his king for making such an attempt. That he did so only to suit his own ends all those who know the Tenali Raman stories know.

I have no claim to be an expert on this subject, nor have I seen even one hundredth of the number of pictures these expert gentlemen appear to have seen. When I was young, —yes I was young once—there was no cinema. These gentlemen will probably think I am a great loser for that and could have been a better man than I am, if I had been better educated by the Indian silver-screen. It is quite possible I have missed much pleasure; but saved much of my parents' hard-earned money. No teen-ager has money of his or her own unless he or she has inherited a fortune from his or her father whom he or she has had the misfortune to lose so early in life. I therefore claim no competence to write on the subject acquired by persistent and frequent

cinema going. I have seen some good pictures and have derived much innocent pleasure from seeing them, from the days of the movies, before talkies came. When Tamil movies first came they all dealt with Hindu mythological or Puranic subjects and were popular in their own way and I also liked them. The first Tamil social picture, so called, I saw was *Mangamma Sabatham* and I do not remember if that picture contained any of the atrocities which have now become the main attractions of present-day South Indian pictures. The corresponding American pictures I call 'leg-shows'. They please only those who have never seen a woman's legs. They have no ethical value and perhaps they were not so deleterious in their effect as some of our own most popular pictures—box office hits they are called—even if these 'leg shows' have now become bust-shows.

Of course one may not go to the cinema to hear sermons. Sad to say we have enough of them without being edified. But no picture which creates evil thoughts in the minds of those who go to see them is permissible for Christians and even for those—the majority—who call themselves so.

To use the silver screen for social and even political propaganda is quite legitimate. I have seen the recently released Tamil picture called *Bharatha Vilas*. It was good fun, in spite of some very crude and some very badly-acted patches. It was out and out propaganda for national re-integration, which was destroyed when we were compelled to accept linguistic states. Everyone thinks of himself these days as either a Tamil or an Andhra or a Malayalee or a Punjabi. National patriotism we have completely lost. The State has taken the place of the country in our affections and loyalty and real patriotism have become out-moded in our country. Money-grabbing has taken their place.

As you have pointed out, there are Christians who think that going to the cinema and getting evil thoughts engendered in one's mind are committing a sin; and they are not far wrong. C. S. Lewis has said somewhere, 'It is not sinful to look at a beautiful woman; but if you in your mind start undressing her, it is sin'. I think he is right. That is what our Lord meant when he said, 'Every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart'. My question to our Christian cinema-goers are these:

(1) Would Jesus in His youth have deliberately gone to see any of the Tamil pictures you, sir, have in mind, if they had existed in His time, whose main purpose is, as you have admirably put in it, coining a new word in your characteristic way, 'sexploitation'.

(2) Has any one ever come out after seeing a picture of this kind with a single uplifting thought or with any spiritual aspiration? Do we not on the other hand gloat over those portions of the pictures which our unregenerate minds enjoyed most?

(3) Has a Christian, as a parent, any right to let his or her teen-age boy or girl or adolescent children go and see these pictures? They are, fictitiously, marked as only for Adults. But they are the ones to which young people flock. This is merely winked at by those people who deliberately decided that they should not be shown to any but Adults and that teen-agers should not be allowed to see them. The very custodians of our morals are wrecking our morality.

Yours Sincerely,  
Old but not Crabbed.



## HONORARY PRESBYTERS

Sir,

In the *South India Churchman* for February 1973 Bishop Gill of Bangalore says, 'Implementation of the scheme for honorary presbyters has been beset with such problems as a presbyter outstaying his period of welcome in one congregation, transfer of his employment to another area, a back-door entry to the full time ministry, etc.'

The problems referred to by the good bishop are difficult to understand. Honorary presbyters, once ordained, work only under the directions of the presbyter-in-charge of the church or congregation to which they are attached. This service they can render *only when called upon to do so*. *Honorary* means clearly *no pay, no allowance, no residential facility*. Nor can any monetary benefit be a perquisite to the post.

The question of transfer to another area can never arise in respect of an honorary man and a back-door entry to the ministry can also never be dreamt of. It is understandable how an honorary man can be guilty of all the misdemeanours listed by Bishop Gill and still call himself an honorary presbyter. If there are any such cases Diocesan authorities have all the remedies to solve the problem.

There is a method to meet this situation. Do away with the scheme of honorary workers and reject at all levels men retired from secular service or willing to take premature retirement to get trained and render service in the church. In service they must retire at 55, but by entering the church service after receiving some training as paid workers they can continue to earn till they are 65 or more. Such men are not honorary men and should not pose any problem. One way to meet the problem is to give them work for a couple of years to start with and extension of service may be granted at the discretion and decision of the Bishop and the concerned authorities for periods of one year at a time. This will make recalcitrant and problem 'honorary workers' and retired men from secular life *in the paid employ of the church* realise that they hold office in the church under sufferance. They should pose no problem but abide by the pleasure of the Diocesan authorities who have recognised

talent and provided an honorary position for the man to feel that he is not unwanted.

Bellary

O. SIVARAMAIA

## NAMING THE MYSORE DIOCESES

Sir,

The Rt. Rev. N. C. Sargant who has retired from service in India from the C.S.I. and has settled down to pastoral work in England wrote to me on 15-2-1973. He says, 'I expect that the Northern Diocese is now firmly established and wonder if the name Karnataka has been substituted.' The good bishop succeeded the Rt. Rev. Premaka Gurushanta and laid down office after shepherding the diocese for over 17 years. In 1947, when it came into being, the diocese was called Mysore Diocese. It was a pretty small diocese but it grew and grew with time and with different churches joining it to such an extent that even with the appointment of an assistant Bishop the diocese became unwieldy and had to be divided into three dioceses with effect from the midnight of 30th April 1970. The new dioceses are the Mysore Northern, Central and Southern Dioceses. In the meanwhile 'Mysore State' has become 'Karnataka State' and hence Bishop Sargant's question 'if the name Karnataka has been substituted?'

The C.S.I. dioceses are spread over Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. In Mysore State the Dioceses are all called Mysore Dioceses. In Andhra Pradesh we have Krishna-Godavari, Rayalaseema, Medak and others; in Tamil Nadu also we have similar divisions—Madura-Ramnad, Tinnevely, etc. And, to be in line with the rest of the dioceses in the C.S.I. it may be well to call our three new dioceses Mangalore, Bangalore and Hubli Dioceses. Whatever be the name our unity in the C.S.I. is essentially unbroken. When Mysore State has become Karnataka the new names will be more meaningful.

Bellary

O. SIVARAMAIA.



### TIRUCHIRAPALLI-THANJAVUR

#### Peace Mission—A Review

In April 1970, two presbyters and eleven evangelists left the Diocese for non-theological reasons along with 2,849 members and joined the International Christian Schools. Mr. Anderson is one of its representatives. Mr. Anderson had given them a second baptism.

#### 1. The Spirit Guides

During the last three years, the guidance of the Holy Spirit was evident at every stage. The Holy Spirit has guided the separated brethren along the path of reconciliation and has led the Diocese to continue to keep the door open for their return.

The Diocesan Executive Committee held in September 1972 had appointed a Peace Mission in order to have a dialogue with the separated brethren. The Peace Mission made a three-way approach in its dialogue with the two presbyters and eleven evangelists.

The first step was to meet the local congregations which had left the Diocese and assess their present situation and find out their reactions to their separation. Vengipalayam, Navakkombu of Kundadam Pastorate, Masagoundampudur and Rangampalayam of Gudimangalam Pastorate and Nalligoundampudur and Neelungalivalasu of Mulanur Pastorate were visited on the 14th, 15th and 16th November, 1972. Most of the separated congregations confessed their ignorance of the reasons for their separation; some of them had been given the impression that it was only an association for the uplift of the community; they intended to come back but were ignorant of the procedure for their return.

The second step was to meet the presbyters and evangelists in Dharapuram area where the separation took place and find out their evaluation of the situation. This meeting took place on 15-11-1972 and the ministers and evangelists expressed their concern over the lack of spiritual nourishment and pastoral oversight for the separated congregations.

Finally, the peace mission had a dialogue with the two presbyters and eleven evangelists on 16th November, 1972, in the Dharapuram Church. In the course of the Dialogue, a joint statement was prepared and signed by the two presbyters and eleven evangelists.

#### 2. Joint Statement—A Survey

The two Presbyters and the eleven evangelists had declared in writing that they had decided to return joyfully to the Diocese and to join the faith and fellowship of the Church of South India; they regretted having caused communal prejudices among the Christians in Karur and Dharapuram areas; they accepted that all their charges against the leaders of the Diocese were baseless; the two presbyters agreed to renew their ordination vows at the reconciliation service; the two presbyters and the eleven evangelists held themselves responsible for bringing back the separated congregation; they agreed to sever their administrative and doctrinal connection with Mr. Anderson; they accepted that it was wrong on their part to have received the second baptism; they affirmed the belief that there is only one baptism according to the faith of the Church of South India. They agreed to hand over to the presbyters of the respective Pastorates Diocesan properties like the Church building and evangelists' houses.

The Diocesan Executive Committee held on 11-1-1973 passed the following resolution:

Resolved to welcome the statement prepared jointly by the two

ministers and eleven evangelists in the presence of the Peace Mission and to thank God for the way we have been led in the path of reconciliation. We receive their apologies with humble gratitude and also record our thanks to the Peace Mission for dedicated work.'

The reconciliation service took place in Dharapuram on 25th March '73 and on 1st April, 1973, in Mulanur, Chinna Dharapuram, Vellakoil and Gudimangalam.

#### 3. Declaration of Dharapuram, 1973

The Holy Spirit revealed some insights to the Trichy-Thanjavur Diocese through this experience of separation and reconciliation.

1. To try to form a 'Church' dividing the Church, the Body of Christ is no evangelism.
2. Personal and non-theological matters should be resolved in a personal way and should not be distorted to cause division in the Church.
3. The answer to outbursts of groupism in the Church based on shallow roots like race, caste and language is fellowship in the Church deeply rooted in Christ and in his spirit.
4. Systematic and Comprehensive scheme of Christian teaching in the Church wards off the danger posed by heresies and division.
5. He who seeks loaves only from Christ is disappointed; but he who seeks Christ for the bread of life finds loaves also.

We are thankful to the Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Solomon Doraiswamy, for his guidance and inspiration. We are grateful to the Rev. C. J. Daniel, the Dharapuram Area Chairman, to the members of the Peace Mission, to the two ministers and eleven evangelists, to the ministers and evangelists in Dharapuram area for all their co-operation and support. Above all, we are deeply indebted to God for having guided us through His spirit at every stage.

R. PAULRAJ,  
Trichy-Thanjavur Diocese.





## Use Political Action for Social Justice

Aguas Buenas, Puerto Rico—Some 70 theologians, political scientists, educators, economists and sociologists ended a week-long consultation on power and development here March 4 calling on all Christian churches to practise what they preach by engaging in political action for social justice.

Co-chairman Jacques Beaumont of France underlined the purpose of the consultation in these words: 'It seeks ways and means of political action for social change in the belief that such action is not only desirable but essential if the Christian message is to have any meaning in today's world.'

'If we gain a little ground here this week, as I believe we are doing, we press others up against the wall. We should not be surprised if they press back, hard and tough, in ways we may not think are very Christian.'

'One thing, however, that those who oppose us should understand: despite attempts to discredit or silence us, we will continue to attack the power structure, to point out its unjust manifestations and to raise the awareness of the Christian community concerning, for example, operations of giant multinational corporations and the complicity of the established churches in their exploitation of the Third World.'

## Indochina Aid plans move Ahead ; German Agency offers Dm 1 Million

Geneva—World Council of Churches' plans for assistance to Indochina are taking shape rapidly following conversations with representatives from North Vietnam, South Vietnam (including the Provisional Revolutionary Government) and the liberation front in Cambodia.

Simultaneously word came from Germany that a supplemental grant of 1

million Deutsch Marks has been made to the WCC's Fund for Reconstruction and Reconciliation in Indochina by the Board of Ecumenical Services of Das Diakonische Werk. In addition, 2 million DM are made available for emergency aid in Indochina, of which DM 250,000 are earmarked for the integration of orphans into society.

The WCC plans an initial \$5 million programme in Indochina involving assistance to Laos, Cambodia, North and South Vietnam. Programmes are already under way in Laos and South Vietnam based on existing service programme operated by the Asian and North American churches plus local groups. New initiatives will be proposed in June on the basis of WCC staff investigations being made in the next few weeks.

Both the PRG and the North Vietnamese will submit detailed proposals to the next meeting of the Board of the Fund for Reconstruction as a result of talks held in Paris with their representatives last month.

Dr. Alan A. Barsh, director of the WCC's Commission on Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service, described the talks as 'very friendly'. WCC assistance was welcomed, he said, because of the spirit in which it was offered. He was hopeful there would be good collaboration in the work of the Fund and of an ecumenical forum on Indochina scheduled in the area in June.

## Eucharistic Congress shows Ecumenical tendencies

Melbourne, Australia—The Roman Catholic Church's commitment to the ecumenical movement was strongly emphasised during the 40th Eucharistic Congress held here last month.

One significant evidence was the ecumenical service in the Melbourne Cricket Ground sponsored by the Congress and the Victoria Council of

Churches in which Christians of many traditions participated. The liturgy included a renewal of the baptismal vows and the sharing of bread as a sign of agape fellowship. Preachers for the service were Jan Cardinal Willebrands, president of the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, and the Rev. Lukas Vischer, director of the Faith and Order Secretariat of the World Council of Churches. 'The ecumenical movement is basically the common conversion to Christ', said Dr. Vischer. 'As we meet one another we find him afresh. We discover how small our vision of him had been.... We are made aware of the elements in our churches which definitely are not given by him but are of our own making.'

'And it is in that moment, as we meet, that we learn to say anew, together: Yes, it is he who has chosen us: And we can begin to reflect together his choice in this world.'

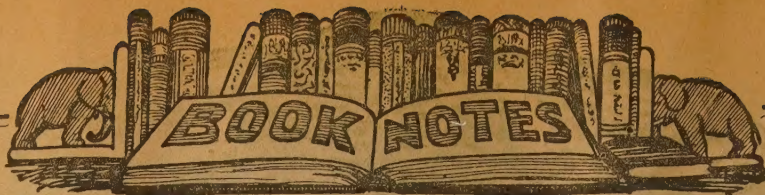
## Mennonites turn used clothing into money for relief and development

How can a good heavy coat be turned into the light filmy saris that people in India and Bangladesh need? Recent experience shows that a good used coat may be sold for approximately \$ 15.00 in Canada. In Calcutta, the Mennonite Central Committee can purchase 15 saris for that.

These Self-Help Centres are not just second hand stores or rummage sale centres. The endorsement of good stewardship being willing to utilize good used clothing and real sharing by the community will make the Centres successful.

—Canadian Council of Churches.





## AMBEDKAR AND THE NEO-BUDDHIST MOVEMENT

Edited by T. S. Wilkinson and M. M. Thomas. Published by the C.L.S. for the C.I.S.R.S., pp. xii + 163, Price Rs. 7.50.

After 1956, three and a half millions of the former 'untouchables' in India have become Buddhists. The book under review is a collection of five papers, which throw light on this Neo-Buddhist movement all over India. This mass conversion to Buddhism is significant, because it represents the first conversion movement between indigenous religions in India in modern times.

The first paper provides the necessary historical background. It is a scholarly essay with rather too many foot notes and a few sweeping conclusions. For example, the struggle between Buddhism and Brahminical Hinduism is pictured as a struggle between two social orders—one which advocated caste system and the other which ignored it. Again the author feels that the success of Buddhism in South India was mainly due to its ignorance of the caste differences. But whether such a complex phenomenon can be given so simple an explanation is doubtful. A few little known facts of history are brought

to light. It is interesting to note that Buddhism was revived first in South India as early as the late 19th century. The efforts made by the Satya-Shodhak Samaj and Mahatma Phoolley, in the 19th century in Maharashtra, to teach the Sudras their human rights and to liberate them from mental and religious slavery are highly interesting. But it is strange that little reference is made in historical textbooks to their efforts, while so much is made about the activities of the Brahma Samaj, Prarthana Samaj and Arya Samaj.

The second paper deals with the spiritual quest of Ambedkar. He felt that Mahatma Gandhi did not take any active step for the removal of untouchability. So he insisted on constitutional safe-guards for the Depressed Classes and finally it led to the Poona Pact. Dr. Ambedkar renounced Hinduism because it did not satisfy his concept of religion. Ultimately he decided on Buddhism in its Hinayana form.

The central paper deals with the social changes effected on the Mahar community on account of their conversion to Buddhism. It is based on the survey conducted in two villages.

The fourth paper answers the question, how far are the converts, within Buddhist religious tradition? The

answers are based on a survey conducted during 1966-67 among the neo-Buddhists. To the question, what should religion give to man, out of 102, 41 have answered 'morality' and only 16, 'equality'. To another question, why did you become a Buddhist, only one out of 112 has answered, 'It is my own wish.'

In the last paper, the author has come to the conclusion that this mass movement was essentially religious, even though its social and economic aspects could not be neglected. The converts, while they were Hindus, observed all Hindu festivals, but after conversion only celebrated the simple feast on full moon day. They simplified their marriage customs and refused to carry out their traditional occupations. The converts have got a new identity, because they feel that they have become the descendants of the original rulers of India. The pro-Buddhist atmosphere in India in the adoption of Buddhist Chakara on the national flag and Asokan pillar of lions as the governmental symbol gives them a greater sense of participation—makes them feel that they have come to their own.

The book is a welcome addition for the understanding of modern India and the CISRS must be congratulated for bringing out the Social Research Series.

Tiruchirapalli. S. JOHN GABRIEL.

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